

Doe of the Dawn

by Steve Arons

For my granddaughter

Athena Jade Aarons

the Doe of the Dawn

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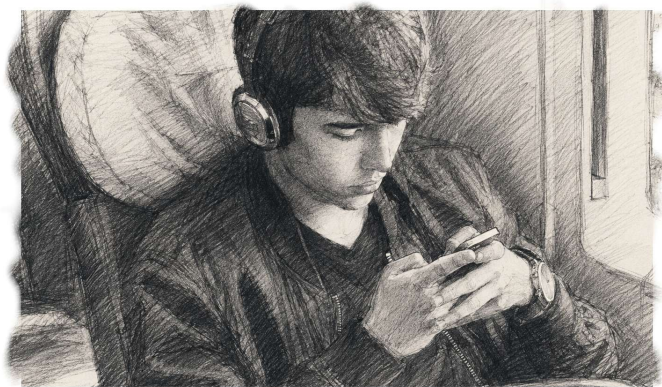
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PROLOGUE—THE SANDMAN

QUARTER PAST EIGHT. A shrill whistle note echoes through the damp dusk. On time as always.

My neck stiffens in anticipation of what comes next. Ian looks up from his cell phone at the same instant as if, a pair of Circus Sarrasani seals, we had rehearsed our gestures together. At last, a rude tug underneath—not the lurch forward I half expected. The undercarriage snaps to attention like a fishing line, its hook well set, powerful electric engines reeling us into the Bavarian night.

Parallel rails guide our way, each rail fixed by cold metal spikes across a bed of wooden ties. I linger in the rear lounge car, looking through dark glass as Munich slips away. Behind the train, the rails draw together.

Along each rail, where the end of one strip butts against the next, there is just enough room for steel to expand in the August sun. At night, the air cools in the Alps and the metal contracts, leaving tiny voids between the rails, unseen but heard. Tell-tale sounds, a slow cadence, heavily laden wheels pressing over these tiny spaces—clickety-clack, clickety-clack—clicks becoming clacks, faster and faster, each sound slightly fainter, less distinct than the last.

Ian and I had boarded the night train in Augsburg, just a few blocks from where I once worked. It is hard to imagine a third of a century passing since the day I first arrived at Sheridan Kaserne in spit-shined black leather shoes. Before I prosecuted my first court-martial, Uncle Sam skipped past second and first lieutenant and commissioned me a Captain O-3. I pinned my railroad bars on both shoulder straps of my Class A uniform. A gold “U.S.” insignia on one lapel and, on the other, a crossed quill and sword. The branch insignia for the Judge Advocate General’s Corps. For all this pomp and circumstance, my uniform did not have a single ribbon or medal. I had been in the military for all of ninety days, got through basic training at the JAG school and landed in West Germany for my tour of duty.

As I walked up the sidewalk to building 104, the JAG office, a sergeant was just leaving. He quickly snapped me a salute and I awkwardly returned it. Part of me wanted to apologize. His uniform had rows of ribbons from combat in Vietnam. I was a box-top captain because I had a law degree. I should have been saluting him but that’s not how the Army works.

Ian, sitting across from me in the rear lounge car, is reading something on his cell phone. “Hey, Robin Williams just died?”

"The comic guy who played Mrs. Doubtfire?" I ask. "What from?"

"Looks like suicide," Ian says.

I nod and, wanting to change the subject, "Are you up for one more dad joke?"

He looks up with those "not really" eyes.

"Just one more?" I ask. "It's real short."

He tries not to sigh and puts his phone down.

"An old bricklayer," I begin, "was building a house on a bluff overlooking Lake of the Ozarks. He made a bet with the foreman that he could guess the exact number of bricks it would take, not counting broken ones. When the job was finished, there was one brick left over."

Ian frowns.

"What do you think he did with it?"

"How should I know?"

"He threw it into the lake!"

Ian stares at me. "That's the joke?"

"That's the joke!"

The silence is deafening.

"I don't get it," he says. "Did he do that to win the bet?"

"Don't ask me. All I know is he chucked that brick as far as he could."

Another silence.

"Dad, no offense. We need to get some sleep."

He stands and stretches his legs. "Both of us. You know we're getting off this train at dawn."

“I know, I know,” I admit. “I just need to look at the tracks for a while.”

Ian heads back toward the sleeper cars. I watch him disappear past the connecting doorway. I turn to look through the dark glass. For a moment, my own reflection is clearer than the Bavarian night beyond.

Back in the day, trains were an easy way to bum around Europe on holiday weekends. Bull-nosed locomotives rammed against stagnant air, diesel engines churning toward the next scheduled stop, a new bundle of Old World sights to see. So long as we did not venture into East Germany and the Soviet bloc, we were fine.

Trains fared well with the passage of time. Now they resemble wingless airplanes in both appearance and speed, an aerodynamic cone up front burrowing through twilight at nearly two hundred miles an hour. I should say kilometers per hour, “clicks,” as we say in the Army. Even today, American civilians cling stubbornly to inches and miles, a system the Europeans—even England itself—long ago abandoned for precise metrics.

Three weeks in Europe: England, Ireland, Germany. We will pass through Austria and then Italy. The sites are starting to blur into one long corridor of stations, platforms, taxis, churches, restaurants, hotel rooms and sleep deferred.

I need some sleep too.

I start my way back to our cabin to see how Ian is doing. The train whimsically nudges me a little one way, the other.

Ian had turned his face against the wall and I don't dare disturb his sleep. That was quick.

I quietly sit on the bottom bunk beneath him, a small light glowing under the upper berth. An electric plug is fixed next to the sink, a welcome sight for this weary traveler. I have my Windows laptop, my phone, Ian's phone, my Canon camera, a razor, and plug adapters enough to make a small plastic tree. I have all I need to begin writing: time to myself, a soft reading light, a lighted keyboard, and a dark window along one side of the sleeper cabin.

Shades of gray dart past the window, too fast to follow. I see my own reflection in the glass, an older man under a narrow lamp, his teen-aged son asleep on the top bunk. I try not to think of this trip as one last, desperate act to salvage something between us. That is too grand, too pathetic, too close to the truth. Ian and I have drifted away from one another for years. Father-son bonding. It is never too late for that, not while both of us are breathing.

I open my laptop.

For a while I type about Augsburg, about memory, about going back to places that do not remember you. The train rocks me a little one way and then the other. Somewhere below the

wheels, the rail joints keep time. Clickety-clack, clickety-clack. I type a sentence I did not expect to type.

It's only a dream.

The words sit there on the screen.

They look odd in the blue-white light. A little like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* tapping her red shoes together and repeating that there is no place like home. I nearly delete the sentence. I do not. Those words, or words close enough to them, once saved me from the Sandman.

When I was a boy, much younger than Ian, I hated falling asleep. Not like children who stay up to watch television or play a little longer. I was afraid, terrified of the nightmare that sleep was sure to bring.

It began one afternoon on the monkey bars behind Rupley Elementary School. Or off the monkey bars.

I climbed up one of the side ladders and, instead of grabbing the first bar underneath and swinging hand over hand to the other side, I wanted to jump on top. Other boys could do it. I could do it. I jumped halfway up, but only halfway. My arms and chest landed on top while my legs dangled below. The hard bar dug into my lower stomach under the weight of my body. I knocked some wind out. I wasn't in pain or frightened, just surprised at what happened. For a moment I hung there, cold metal pressed

through my shirt into my skin, the steady thump of my heartbeat louder than the voices around me.

I pulled one knee up and the other and managed to climb on top.

A schoolmate did the same. We walked back and forth on top of the monkey bars, end to end, pretending to be soldiers in the television series *Combat!* I imagined stopping when we reached one hundred, counting each step out loud like two guards marching back and forth. One, two, three, four. There was sand beneath us, enough sand, I suppose, to make falling safe. That was the idea.

The next thing I remember, my friend was screaming at me to get up.

Half my face was sunk in the sand that covered the whole playground. I sat up and wiped sand from my eyes and nose. His voice was a little less frantic after I sat up. He told me again to get up. I did. I was all right. No blood. Just a scratch on my hand. I guess I tried to break the fall.

I could see all right straight ahead, but on both sides everything swirled around. The schoolyard, the boys, the bars, the trees, all of it moving at the edges. He walked me home and promised not to tell my mother anything. I told my dad that I had a bad headache and did not

want to eat. I went into my bedroom and fell asleep.

To this day, I remember every detail of the dream that night, or at least the important parts.

I am sitting in somebody's car. I do not recognize the inside at all and, outside, everything is wrong. We fly over the top of a barbed-wire fence. Beyond the fence is sand, low bushes, and a long stretch where the ground drops away, like a river bed except there was no water. I have never seen so much sand and not a blade of grass. The tires make no sound on the roadway because we are floating above everything, like in a movie.

Nothing is underneath

I keep waiting for the car to come down.

Then it does.

A deafening crash.

Metal folding. Glass shattering. The roof caving in. Noise everywhere at once.

Just as suddenly, it is quiet.

I want to get out but I am stuck. I can't see but I know that someone or something is reaching for me. Don't grab me, please don't grab me.

Night after night, the same dream. The same nightmare. By the third night, in the middle of the dream, I knew what would happen so I started to hunch over, my face between my knees, and lace my fingers together behind the back of my head like the tornado drill we

practiced in in the hallway at school. That didn't help much.

Every night, when I go to bed, I try to stay awake as long as I could. I am too afraid to sleep. Cars pass outside the house. I can hear the hum of their tires as they approach and pass by on the road in front of our house. Their headlights shine a dim light on one side of the ceiling in my bedroom and cross to the other side. I listen for sounds, my parents, both brothers, proof that morning will come, that they are still alive. I end up falling asleep. When I finally wake up the next morning, I am curled tight like a cocoon, my heart pounding and wanting to cry.

I didn't tell my parents about the fall or the nightmares but somehow they figured it all out. Maybe they already knew something was wrong. Parents have their ways.

They take me to see a doctor. A psychologist. He has me play with Tonka toys in a sandbox in his office.

It is stupid. Doesn't he know I'm eight? I'm not some dumb little boy. He watches me push the trucks through the sand as if the trucks will tell him something. He asks about the monkey bars. He asks how everything looked after I hit my head, how the sides of my eyes spun around. I tell him that was only the first night.

He tells my parents I had a mild concussion. He says the sand in the dream might be the sand

beneath the monkey bars. He says I am afraid of falling. He says I am afraid of dying. I am afraid of the Sandman.

My parents smile.

That makes me angry. I never said a Sandman was trying to grab me. I never said his name or even what he looked like. My dream was not funny. Not to me. It feels as real as day, more real than his stupid sandbox.

He tells my parents to leave leave a night light on in my room. He tells me that, in the middle of the nightmare, I should remember it is only a dream. Squeeze my fists tight. Say it again and again. This is a dream. This is only a dream. Like Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz, he says. Keep saying it and the dream will go away.

That night I mean to do what he said. I really do. But when the dream comes, I forget. I am in the car again. The fence. The sand. The empty river. Bending over, closing my eyes. The drop. The crash. Someone trying to grab me and take me away. I wake up crying.

It goes on like this for two or three more nights.

One night began like any other. I am flying across the empty river. I bend over waiting for the crash. I feel trapped just like always. My nightmare has no pity.

But this time I remember. I remember what to do.

Clench everything.

Fists. Arms. Legs. My whole body.

I raise up to look at Sandman. To look him right in the eyes. I scream “it’s only a dream” again and again.

Suddenly, everything is gone.

I am sitting upright in my bed. The nightlight is on and I look around my room just like when I went to bed. The dream is over. No more Sandman! I am awake. I look down and relax my fists.

It worked.

I throw off the covers and leap out of bed. I run out of my room and into the hallway to tell my mother.

A sliver of light leaks through the crack of a door into the pitch black hallway. I move closer. The door to mom and dad’s bedroom is ajar and I peek inside.

The light comes from an angel, standing at the foot of their bed, gazing in their direction. A face gentle and beautiful, ageless, untouched by hardship. The angel reminds me of pictures in a big Jerusalem bible in the living room. A long white tunic shines beneath a crimson robe.

I can’t see the rest of the room but my parents must be asleep. I’m afraid that the angel will notice me standing there. I feel like I shouldn’t be there, so I sneak back into the hall.

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As I turn, a wooden floorboard creaks under
my foot.



I—THEY CAME BEFORE

THE TIMBERS CREAK OVERHEAD.

Penelope opens her eyes. The *Kath* rises, settles, and rolls slowly from side to side on the dark Atlantic. They set sail on June 6, 1647. Almost eight weeks have passed, most of them stolen by fever, rain, and salt air, and now they are days—perhaps hours—from New Amsterdam.

A steady rain taps against the small round port above the berth.

Kent's father, a baron, said they would have a private cabin. A baron and his bride, bound for the New World.

Whatever had been promised in Amsterdam came to nothing at sea. Below deck, they share close air with the Zants and their daughters,

damp wool, bilgewater, fever, and too many bodies breathing in the dark.

Kent sleeps beside her, fever-spent and thin beneath the blanket.

Penelope never knew what was said after Kent first saw her. Only that men began speaking in lowered voices. His father. Her father. A baron with a son. A stern minister and his beautiful daughter.

No one asked Penelope. Obedience was expected. A marriage arranged. A title!

Kent smiled at her.

Not foolishly. Not proudly.

Kindly.

He was handsome. Everyone saw that. What surprised her was his mind. His manners. The way he listened to her before answering.

Obedience became tenderness.

Her arm rests across his chest.

She opens her palm against him.

“My husband.”

More softly:

“My love.”

For a moment she simply listens.

His breathing. His steady heartbeat.

The ship sighs in the gentle swells.

The sea lifts them.

Then—

The Kath grinds to a halt.

Something hard underneath.

The hull shudders.
Wood cracks somewhere below.
The berth throws her to the floor.
Someone cries in the dark. A child screams
somewhere.

Trunks slide. Crockery breaks.
Kent tries to rise.
He cannot.

By first light, the rain has thinned to mist.
Most of the passengers are on shore, huddled
among barrels, rope, broken spars, and wet
chests dragged from the hold.

Behind them, the *Kath* leans toward the surf.
Ahead, low dunes and dark woods.

Kent lies beneath a soaked cloak, shaking so
hard his teeth chatter.

The captain says they must go.

“Go where?” Penelope asks.

“New Amsterdam.”

“How?”

He points toward the boats.

She looks at Kent. “He cannot walk.”

No one answers.

A woman says they will send help.

The woods are not safe.

In a raised voice, a man complains that they
cannot risk the lives of everyone for one sick
man who’s going to die anyway.

Kent opens his eyes. “Go.”

Penelope kneels beside him and takes his hand. “No.”

Someone touches her shoulder.

She pulls away.

By afternoon, the boats are gone.

Rain returns near dusk.

The shore grows empty around them.

Kent sleeps. Or falls into fever. She cannot tell any more.

She is sitting beside him when he opens his eyes.

She smiles at him until the woods move.

Not wind.

Not branches.

Men.

Kent tries to rise.

Penelope reaches for him.

His eyes go past her.

Behind her.

He shrieks and reaches out.

A hand catches her hair.

Then—

Nothing.

Cold returns first.

Not pain. Cold.

Rain on her face. Sand in her mouth. The tide hissing near her feet.

She is on the beach.

She does not know how.

“Kent.”

No sound comes out.

She turns her head.

He lies on the sand a few yards away, one arm bent beneath him, his face turned from her.

She tries to crawl to him.

Her fingers dig into wet sand.

Something pulls deep inside her.

She stops.

The rain falls harder.

The sea comes in and slips back out.

Footsteps move near her.

She closes her eyes.

Not again.

A shadow falls across her face.

A voice speaks above her, low and strange,
neither Dutch nor English.

She cannot lift her head.

The shadow kneels.

The beach slips away.

~

A shimmering light blinds her eyes. For a moment it looks like chandelier glass, candle flame caught in crystal, Kent smiling across the wedding table after she crinkles her nose. They brought out eel on a polished platter, but she never liked eel.

She blinks.

The light fades away. No crystal. No chandelier. She hoped to see the thick wooden timbers overhead from the ship, but she sees

only smoke-darkened stone. The ceiling is part earth, part stone, part something built by human hands. Branches and bark close the opening on one side. A ray of light slips through the gaps onto her face. The bright light woke her up.

But where?

An old fire lies cold near the back wall.

Charcoal.

Ash.

The black shapes of half-burned wood.

Above them, charcoal lines cross the stone.

Not pictures exactly.

Lines.

A circle folding into itself.

Something that might be antlers.

Or branches.

She tries to sit up, but she is too weak.

She falls back asleep.



She hears a crackle.

A louder pop.

Fire.

Not the old fire inside. A living fire
somewhere beyond the shelter.

A shadow passes across the opening.

She stiffens.

An old man steps inside carrying a shell filled
with steaming broth.

He stops when he sees her awake.

She screams.

The sound hurts her throat.

He does not move.

After a moment he lowers himself beside the bedding and sets the shell near her hand.

He opens both palms.

Slowly.

She watches him.

His face is weathered by sun and years outdoors. His garments are not cloth. No buttons. No clasps. Nothing cut and stitched.

He touches two fingers to his mouth and points to the shell.

Her lips are dry.

The warmth smells of smoke and fish.

She drinks.

Salt.

Smoke.

Something from the sea.

The old man smiles.

A little later he returns.

This time he brings pieces of cooked fish.

She looks more closely.

Eel.

A memory rises. Staring at the crystal light from the chandelier. Kent laughing softly across the wedding table after she crinkles her nose at the silver platter. The room full of Dutch royalty, and she is sitting at the table of honor.

Her father looks over to see what amused them. Their eyes meet and she smiles. A day beyond anything she could have imagined.

The old man. He motions again for her to eat.

“I know,” she crinkles her nose. “I hate eel.”

He smiles.

Again.

She almost smiles back.

He touches his fingers to his mouth.

She eats.

She is very hungry.

And very tired.

The old man says nothing.

Neither does she.

She touches her chest. “Penelope.”

He watches her.

Again she touches herself. “Penelope Prince.”

She points toward him. “You?”

The old man smiles.

She waits.

He only smiles.

At last she smiles too. Where am I? She does not know where or how. One thing she knows. She is not alone.



The next time she wakes—the next time she remembers—the old man is gone.

Only embers remain where the fire had been.

A thin ribbon of smoke rises through the opening.

She swings her feet away from the bedding.
She is wearing an oversized pair of men's
trousers and a soiled blouse.

Not hers.

When she tries to sit up, pain catches beneath
her ribs.

She looks inside her trousers. A scar crosses
from one side of her lower belly to the other.
Ridged now. No longer wet.

This worries her more than blood. The
wound is clean. Healing. Time has passed.

How long have I been here?

Near the back wall lies a heap of clothes.

She crawls toward it.

The clothes smell like the sea.

Dirty linen.

A man's shirt.

A child's stocking.

Buckles.

Clasps.

Careful rows of stitching.

The old man wears skins. Not like these.

Her fingers move through the pile.

She sees it.

Her nightgown.

Torn.

She pulls it into her lap.

The cloth is stiff.

Salt.

Dried blood.

Her hand moves again to her scar.
Memory presses at the edges.
Cold water.
Moonlight.
The shore. Men running. Something horrible.
Trying to get away before they grab her. Hiding.
She drops the nightgown.
The walls feel smaller now.
The smoke.
The charcoal.
The old man.
The clothes.
She gathers the nightgown against her chest
and rises too quickly.
Pain catches deep in her belly.
She does not care.
She goes outside barefoot.
The woods close around the little shelter.
Pine.
Salt air.
Needles beneath her feet.
Voices come from the trees.
Low voices.
One old.
One young.
She freezes.
The old man stands near the fire.
Beside him stands a young man. A knife
hangs at his belt. Penelope knows him somehow.
Remembers him.

The beach. Rain. Hands. Kent screaming.
She stumbles backward.
The young man looks at her.
She grabs the torn nightgown with one hand
and presses the other against the scar across her
belly.
“You.”
The old man turns quickly.
She points at the young man.
“You did this.”
The old man says something sharp.
The young man answers and stops when the
old man speaks again.
This time the words are harder.
The young man looks once more at Penelope,
turns and disappears into the trees.
She lunges after him.
Pain folds her in half.
The old man catches her before she falls.
She strikes his chest with both hands.
He lets her strike him.
She points back toward the shelter.
The clothes. The buckles. The clasps. The
careful rows of stitching.
“Those were ours.”
Her voice breaks.
“You took them.”
The old man shakes his head.
Once.
Slowly.

She does not believe him.

She grabs his wrist and pulls him toward the shelter.

Toward the heap of Dutch clothes.

The torn nightgown. The dried blood.

“See,” she says, rage in her voice.

He eyes look, not at the clothes, but at her face. He points away from the shelter. Toward the trees. Toward the shore.

She does not understand.

Her knees weaken.

He catches her again.

This time she cannot push him away.

One arm passes beneath her knees.

The other comes behind her back and under her shoulders.

He lifts her.

The smell of leather and smoke. His strong, steady arms.

A thought comes. Before the smoke blurs.

He carried me before.



When she wakes again, the old man is still there. A shell rests beside her bedding.

Fish.

Berries.

Something sweet from the woods.

He smiles when he sees her awake.

She does not smile back.

The nightgown still lies next to her feet.

She picks it up.
The torn cloth. Dark stains.
The cloth shakes in her hands.
She points to it.
She grabs her trousers with one hand, and she
curls her other fingers as though holding a
blade.
She draws it across the air.
“You did this?” she says in anger.
The old man does not move.
She presses both palms against his chest.
Strong.
Steady.
“Him?”
He only shakes his head.
Once.
Then he points away from the shelter.
Toward the woods.
She does not understand.
He crouches, turns slightly, offering his back.
She shakes her head. No. She will walk.
The old man rises. He stays beside her.
When her steps fail again, she finally reaches
for him.
This time he carries her piggyback.
Her arms around his shoulders.
The woods thin.
Salt rides the wind.
Ahead, the forest opens over a sandy beach.
Wreckage lies scattered along the shore.

Broken timber.

Rope.

Bits of cloth moving in the breeze.

The old man walks farther.

To an old hollow near the roots of a great tree.

He stops.

Points.

Cold moves through her.

Moonlight.

Water.

Darkness.

A tree hollow.

She remembers crouching inside, hiding so
no one will grab her. Dried blood inside. Her
blood.

“Kent?” her voice breaks.

She turns toward the sea. “Kent!”

Only gulls answer.

She looks back.

The old man lowers his eyes.

He slowly shakes his head.

He takes her in a different direction. Not back
up into the coastal woods, but along the beach.
She walks along the soft sand. Soon, she is too
tired. He lifts her onto his back. She rests her
head on his shoulder, trying to stay awake as
long as she can. His shoulder. Salt. Wind. Sand.
Gulls. They walk a long distance.

A church bell. Not just one. Eight, ten bells,
one after another.

She yanks herself off him and runs toward the sound.

In the distance there are roofs. Fences. A colony. Dutch.

She runs back to him and, out of anger, pushes as hard as she can against his chest. "You took me here? You leave me here?"

He points toward the bell.

He wants her to keep going.

He turns toward the bluffs and takes a few steps.

She runs toward him, catches his wrist, and tries to pull him down.

"Don't go," she sobs. "Don't leave me."

He gently frees his hand from hers and looks into her blue eyes.

She sinks into the sand.

Tears come before words.

"Don't go," she pleads.

The old man points once more toward the bell.

Toward the thatched roofs.

"Wicheikw."

She had never heard his voice before now. She does not know the word, but she knows what it means.

Go.

She shakes her head. "No."

He says nothing.

The wind moves through the grasses.

A gull cries somewhere near the shore.
The old man kneels in front of her.
She is still crying.
He reaches out.
Not to pull her up.
Only to rest one rough hand against her
shoulder.
His eyes glisten.
A tear slips down a weathered line of his face.
She stops crying long enough to stare at him.
The old man rises.
He points again toward the settlement.
“Wicheikw.”
This time the word is almost lost in the wind.
He turns.
She stays on the ground right where she is.
The sand cold beneath her palms.
She watches as he climbs away from the sand
and toward the grasses.
His hand touches his face, but he never looks
back.
Never.
The woods take him.
A single note from the church bell threads
through the wind.
Quarter past the hour.
She rises and walks that way.



In the orchard somewhere, that meadowlark
is carrying on.

She cannot quite see him this afternoon, but on other days she saw the black V across his bright yellow breast.

She is sprawled across the planks on the front porch, a quilt bunched beneath her cheek. At first his song had sounded beautiful, but by now she doesn't want to get up and go inside. She would sooner have him tell the next farm how important he is.

Her library book rests open beside her, no longer at the page she had been reading.

Poplar leaves whisper overhead.

Then—

A very different sound.

Not wind.

Not the lark. Not a mockingbird or whip-poor-will. Something else.

Far beyond the first rise, the trees shimmer in the humid afternoon.

She cannot see a darn thing.

The shimmer gathers itself into movement.

A figure.

Someone coming this way.

She pushes herself upright.

The figure moves along the dusty road.

The hill gives him up.

She can see now.

He is riding a horse.

He looks stiff and uncomfortable in the saddle.

The horse makes another wet snort.

So that was the sound.

She gets all the way up from the porch floor and calls toward the house. "Oma, we've got company!"

She closes the book and sets it on the table.

Without thinking, both palms smooth the front of her dress.

Not the blue one. The old one she wears around the house, faded at the elbows and hem.

"Oma!"

"For heaven's sake, Annie," Oma says, the screen door squeaking shut behind her. "I heard you the first time."

"We've got company."

Oma nods. "I see that." Fussing with her hair, she looks at the pitcher of iced tea and two glasses on the outside table. "Go fetch another glass, child. And more ice."

Annie glances back up the road. The rider is closer now. She runs inside.

"Inside the cupboard," Oma calls after her.

Almost to the kitchen, Annie yells back, "I know."

Of course a clean one.

Not a dirty glass from the sink.

She is not a little girl.

Annie comes back with the extra glass and more ice. She has changed into the blue dress.

Not her Sunday dress, exactly, but close enough that Oma notices and says nothing.

The young man ties the horse to the porch post at the far corner and removes his hat.

“John Pope, ma’am.” He nods politely at Oma. “United States Census Bureau. But you can call me John.”

Oma replies, “Mrs. Gabler.”

“We’re counting all the people in the county, one farm at a time,” he explains.

Annie notices his shirt.

Clean.

The pressed cotton clings where he has sweated through.

He looks pale.

Skinnier than her brothers.

City boy.

“You must be thirsty,” Mrs. Gabler says. “Annie brought out some ice and tea.”

“Much obliged, ma’am.”

John looks for Annie, but she is already halfway to the pump.

The handle squeaks.

Water splashes into the bucket.

She carries it carefully toward the horse and sets it down on the edge of the porch.

“Annie,” Mrs. Gabler warns, “what did I tell you about horses before you know them better?”

Annie kneels anyway.

“I know this one.”

The horse lowers his head and drinks noisily.
Water runs from his mouth onto the wooden
floorboards and splashes at his feet.

Annie smiles. "What's his name?"

"Hector."

"Why Hector?" she asks, crinkling her nose.

John looks at the horse, then back at her. "I
don't rightly know. He isn't mine."

Annie pats the horse between the ears. "That
explains it."

"Well then," John says, opening the large
notebook on the table. "Oldest to youngest
ought to do it."

"That would be me," Mrs. Gabler answers.
"Caroline Gabler—I was Schweyer before I
married Christoph. Poor man's gone a few years
now."

John scribbles something down.

"There's my son-in-law August Steuernagel.
Fifty-seven? He and Tillie went into town for
supplies."

Annie strokes Hector's mane.

"And the boys?" John asks.

"Fritz first. Born in Saint Petersburg. John in
Germany. William came later in Milwaukee."

John looks up from the notebook. "You
moved that much?"

Mrs. Gabler laughs softly. "Moved? We
wandered half the world."

She lifts one finger. "Russia first. Saint Petersburg."

She lifts two fingers. "Then Germany. No work."

A third. "Milwaukee. So cold. As soon as winter broke, we got a raft. Took the whole family. Everything we owned."

She gestures toward the fields. "Wound up here. German settlers. Mississippi bottoms. Rich soil black as stove soot. Mild winters."

"And Annie? Was she born here?"

The smile leaves Mrs. Gabler's face. "Julie died bringing Annie into the world."

John lowers his pencil.

Annie stops petting Hector.

"Doctor saved the baby," Mrs. Gabler says quietly. "Not the mother."

Silence settles over the porch.

John looks back toward Annie by the horse. "How old are you?"

"Sixteen," Annie answers too quickly.

"Not quite," Mrs. Gabler corrects. "She turns sixteen in August."

Annie looks down.

"Where did you get those blue eyes?" John asks awkwardly.

Annie looks up again.

"Is there room for that in your book, John Pope?"

He smiles. "No."

“Well then, let’s leave it blank.”

✱

The mirror hangs in the reception outside the executive offices.

Large. Gold framed. Too fancy for a defense plant, Teddye thinks.

She stops anyway.

The new blouse is blue.

Almost the same shade as her eyes.

Her fingers smooth the fabric across her waist and her collar.

A touch beneath one eye.

Mascara.

Her uncles used to tell her she had Grandma Annie’s eyes. The same blue.

Grandma Annie died long before Teddye was born.

Still—

The eyes remained.

She gathers the papers against her chest.

Machine measurements. Widths. Clearances.

Numbers for the building Don is drawing.

The executive door opens with a soft click.

Wood below. Frosted glass above.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE.

The letters read backward from this side.

Light passes through the glass but nothing beyond it.

She pushes through.

The drafting room feels enormous with everyone gone for the long weekend.

Light leaks through the blinds. Fluorescent tubes hum overhead. One flickers near the exit.

Don is hunched over the blueprint, sleeves rolled, an L-shaped ruler held flat beneath one hand.

The room smells faintly of graphite and paper.

He does not notice her at first.

She waits.

Then he looks up.

And does.



The bell above the piano shop door gives a bright little ring.

Teddye looks up from the register.

Gin stands in the doorway smiling.

Al follows carrying an overnight bag.

“You found it,” Teddye says.

Al grins. “First try.”

Gin looks at him. “After two wrong turns.”

“All’s well that ends well,” Al says.

He stops beside one of the uprights.

Dark walnut.

Brass pedals.

He runs a hand along the polished wood.

“Careful,” Gin says.

“I know fine furniture when I see it.”

“You’re a carpenter. That’s why I’m worried.”

Mr. Warren comes from the back room
carrying tuning tools.

The smell of varnish and old wood follows
him.

Pianos wait in rows.

One stands open with its strings exposed like
gold wire.

Another has yellowed keys.

Mr. Warren smiles. "Family?"

"My sister Gin and her husband Al."

He nods. "Well then, Mrs. Costello, why don't
you get on home."

Teddye looks up. "Really?"

"You've got a soldier coming to town."

Her smile softens. "Thank you so much."

Mr. Warren hangs the cloth back over the
piano bench.

"But I expect you opening the store first thing
Monday morning."

"Yes sir."

"And tell that husband of yours --- well — just
say hi for me."

She laughs.

The apartment is quiet.

Gin and Al are asleep in the back bedroom.

The drive from Saint Louis had caught up
with them.

Teddye waits.

Tea cups still sit in the sink.

Coffee later for herself.

Soft drinks cool in the icebox.
The kitchen table shines beneath the light.
Chrome legs.
Metal edging.
Four matching chairs.
Temporary furniture for a temporary life.
Month to month.
Sixty days perhaps.
Maybe less.

A faint noise. Headlights.
A car door.

Footsteps on the walkway.
She reaches the door before he knocks.

Army green.

Pressed uniform.

Road dust on his shoes.

He kisses her harder than she expected. His fingers find the top button to her blue blouse.

“Hey,” she whispers, slapping his wrist. She nods with her eyes to the back bedroom.

He looks and whispers, “Gin and Al?”

“Asleep.”

“I’m probably the only private in the barracks with a weekend pass so I can see my bride in, in, where are we again?”

She laughs softly.

“Edwardsville, silly.”

“Oh right.” He looks past her into the apartment. “I bet we haven’t heard the last of

how Sergeant First Class Al Holzum whipped ole' Rommel in Africa."

"Oh, we'll hear plenty about Africa."

She closes the front door behind him.

They walk quietly into the kitchen. Over the sink, the light is still on.

Teddye puts water on for tea.

Don sits at the little table.

Chrome legs.

Metal edging.

Four matching chairs.

Gin and Al sleeping only a wall away.

He loosens his collar.

Road dust still clings to his shoes.

"You hungry?"

"A little."

She brings him leftovers from supper.

He eats for a moment.

"You should have some."

"We already ate. Gin and Al."

He looks at her. "You still watching your figure?"

She smiles.

"A girl has to do something while her husband is off playing soldier."

He laughs. Quiet. "Yesterday, when they were handing out weekend passes?"

She shakes her head.

"I showed mine to my bunkmate."

"You did?"

He nods.

“Probably shouldn’t have.”

“Why not?”

“He’s stuck at the base all weekend.”

She smiles.

“I ribbed him a little.”

“How so?”

“I said something smart like, ‘Newlyweds have their privileges.’”

She laughs softly.

“What did he say?”

He shrugs. “I don’t know. He’s always saying he’ll never get married.”

“Sounds like,” she thinks for a second. “What do they call him, a ‘confirmed bachelor’?”

He pokes at his food. “It’s not like that. He just means with the war and all.”

The smile fades.

“Listen,” he blurts out.

She looks up.

“I have to tell you something,” he says.

Her smile disappears. “What?”

“They changed my orders.”

“Changed?” she asks, sitting a little straighter. “What does that mean?”

He sets down his fork. “A while back when they had us all take some aptitude test.”

“That test?” she asks. “I didn’t think it was that important.”

He shrugs. "I didn't think so. But Frank Miller and I got the highest scores, I guess."

She waits.

"They're pulling us out," he says.

Her stomach tightens. "Out?"

"Japan."

The room goes quiet.

"Not Korea. Japan," he explains. "Some base in Japan. Communications MOS. Under the flagpole with all the one- and two-star generals. A bunch of old men moving pins on maps while the boys get shot at."

He pokes at the food and looks up at her, staring at her blue eyes. "It's safer than digging foxholes in Korea with artillery everywhere."

She lets out a breath she did not know she was holding.

"You scared me."

"I know." He looks down at his plate.

"Everyone else is going."

The room goes quiet.

"In a few weeks the whole 101st will be standing on a dock in California, boarding a ship for Korea. Not me." He shakes his head. "I hate leaving them. Like I chickened out for something better."

Pausing for a moment, she reaches across the table and takes his hand. "Someday, this will be over."

He looks up.

“You’ll come back home,” she says. “Not here.” She looks around the little apartment. “Saint Louis.”

“And then?” he asks.

She squeezes his hand. “And then we start our life.”



The room smells faintly of antiseptic and boiled vegetables.

The patient in the other bed is playing Nat King Cole on a transistor radio. “Smile though your heart is aching.”

Teddye looks over.

The woman follows her eyes to Mae asleep in the bed. She turns the radio off.

Late afternoon light lies across the blanket covering Mae’s legs.

Her arms are frail.

Teddye sits beside the bed holding Mae’s hand between both of hers.

Smaller now.

Nurse’s hands once.

Mae used to lift patients in and out of bed.

Teddye’s belly presses against her chair.

Only a few weeks left now.

“Mom?”

Mae opens her eyes. “You still here, Myrtle?”

Teddye smiles despite herself and looks down at their hands. “Tell me again.”

Mae closes her eyes. “The tornado?”

Teddye nods.

“Oh, child.”

Mae gathers her thoughts for a moment. “It was wash day. We were living in Grandma Annie’s house long after she passed. Once a week, Mrs. Williams came over to help with cleaning. She always brought her little girl to play with your sister Virginia. We left them in the dining room playing with dolls and went into the back room to do some more of the laundry.

“Your older brothers, Clyde and Art, were at school just a few blocks away.”

“And Lester wasn’t born yet?” Teddye adds.

Mae gives her a look. “Do you want to tell the story?”

Teddye presses one finger to her lips.

Mae waits, then continues. “So Lester wasn’t born yet and the girls were underneath that huge table with some dolls. Your stroller was right up against the table so Virginia could still watch you. She was so proud having a baby sister. Your brothers couldn’t be bothered but she spent day and night with you.”

“That’s when the noise came.”

Mae’s grip tightens on Teddye’s hand. “It sounded like a freight train. The house shuddered, things falling everywhere, the top floor ripped clean off.”

Teddye has heard this story as long as she can remember. When she was little and afraid of the dark, Mae would sit on the edge of her bed and whisper it to her, this story and others, until the room felt safe again.

Now Teddye is the one sitting at her mother's bedside, listening to the same story. Late sun reaches across the room to warm her face. Her mother's voice comforts her still.

"Mrs. Williams and I ran to the dining room door. We tried and tried but could not force it open. The whole foundation must have shifted and that door was jammed shut. We thought..."

Mae stops. She swallows, glances out the hospital window and sniffles. Mae turns toward Teddye. "We thought the tornado had taken you."

The room grows quiet.

"When we finally pushed it open, the ceiling was gone. Just rain coming down gentle as an afternoon mist. Shards of glass from the window everywhere you stepped. One wall had collapsed. Bricks flung across that sturdy table and all over. But under the table, there you were. The bricks had sailed across the table and over the stroller, but there were three girls, safe and sound, too shocked to even cry."

Teddye pictures that same mahogany table years later in Gin's dining room. Al sanded the deep scratches and polished the mahogany until

it shone like new. Not just any table. The table. The one that stood between us and a wall of bricks.

Mae turns toward her daughter. “It wasn’t your time, Myrtle.”

“Mom, you know why I changed it.”

Mae says nothing.

“They called me Myrtle the Turtle,” Teddye says. “I hated it.”

“I know,” Mae says.

“Why keep calling me that?” Teddye asks.

Mae holds her daughter’s eyes a moment, trying to smile. “Maybe because mothers are, well, stubborn.”

Teddye looks down at her pregnant stomach and Mae perks up a little.

“Soon enough,” Mae says, “your child will come into the world.”

Teddye says nothing.

“When you hold him in your arms,” Mae says, “you’ll know.”

Mae’s eyes drift for a moment. “You see, when the storm was over and I found you alive, I grabbed you from the stroller. You were caked in dust. I blew the dust from your face, held you in my arms, and whispered your name.”

“Myrtle?” Teddye asks.

Mae nods. “Over and over,” she whispers.

Teddye laughs through wet eyes. “Mom, I can’t wait till you come home. I’ll have the baby and you can hold him in your arms.”

“I don’t know, child,” Mae says. “I’m so tired of fighting this cancer. It may be my time.”

Teddye shakes her head no. She sits there in silence, a million thoughts go by. A little later she kisses Mae’s forehead.

Visiting hours over.

The hallway feels longer now.

Is this the last time?

Outside, evening settling over the city.

Teddye drives past the empty lot on North Grand where their house once stood.

Only grass now.

Even the foundation gone.

A few young saplings.

St. Alphonsus.

Rock Church.

The little chapel off to one side.

She likes to stop there for a minute or two.

To think.

To pray.

Tonight she is alone.

One hour.

Two.

Three.

Votive candles burning low.

Her knees aching.

Still she stays.

Four hours.

Five.

Mary.

Mother of Jesus.

A mother like Mae.

Like me, soon enough.

Another thought.

Esther. Hadassah before she became Esther.

A woman named Myrtle who answered to
another name.

A good woman.

Before she married Don, Teddye took classes
to become Catholic.

They said the saints are not there to replace
prayer. Don't worship saints. Don't pray to
saints. Pray with them.

I'm not praying to Esther.

I'm asking for her help.

Ask Him for me.

Quiet.

Please.

Only candles. Only breathing.

Let her see my baby.

It's not her time. Not yet.

Let Mom come home.



II—THE CALLING

MAE DID COME HOME. She refused a wheelchair, walked out of the hospital on her own two feet, and came home with Don and Teddye. Teddye cared for her, bringing meals, changing sheets, answering every call. During the Depression, Mae had to send Virginia, Teddye and Lester to live with relatives who could afford to feed them. Now Teddye had her mother all to herself.

Well, almost.

Next to Mae's bedroom was mine, with a crib and side rails. Mom cared for her mother in one room and raised a fussy child in the next.

After Grandma Mae died, Dad found a good job in downtown Chicago as regional manager of a greeting card company. To me, he was the best dad in the world.

To get started in a new city, we lived in an apartment across the street from Lake Michigan. Dad would go to work and mom would take me in a stroller to a big park along the lake.

Dad bought a house in Chicago Heights. I would park my blue metal car with push pedals in my special place in the carport of our new home, leaving plenty of room for my dad's real car when he got home from work. He often worked late.

One day I somehow got my arm stuck in the metal steering wheel of my car. The next door neighbor, a fireman, knew how to get me free. I told my dad what happened when he got home.

Another day I pedaled my car so far into a huge mud puddle. I was stuck and just sat there. The neighbor laid down a path of two by fours to rescue both of us.

Sometimes I would pedal down the block to watch older boys playing. I never got out of my little car to play with them but I studied everything they did. I listened to what they would say to each other. I would repeat the same things to my parents but they did not understand.

One Saturday my dad had to work in town, and I got to go with him. We drove to the Chicago Heights station and took the L downtown. I mostly looked out the window until the train went underground near our stop.

When we climbed back to street level, I looked up at the skyscrapers and fell on my hands and knees. Dad looked puzzled and picked me back up. The tall buildings looked like they were about to topple onto us. They leaned toward each other in the sky, the way the train tracks seem to meet far ahead.

After my middle brother Kenny was born, we moved to a bigger house in Park Forest. Kenny's umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck during birth and he suffered brain damage. People could tell Kenny was retarded. That was the word then. Strangers tried not to stare, but I worried what they thought of us. What they thought of me.

I remember getting embarrassed at school one day. It was not about Kenny. I did it to myself.

One night, I watched a beach movie about Gidget on the television. One beatnik wore big sunglasses. The next morning our young teacher, a nun in her black and white habit, walked into the class wearing the same kind of sunglasses. She had the most beautiful face, and I loved her.

"Hey, Big Daddy," I blurted out.

Her smile vanished as she slapped me across the face.

I was too startled to cry. I almost did cry but not in front of the class. She had been teaching

cursive handwriting to the class but, that afternoon, I had to write the same thing over and over fifty times.

The second graders took their first communion at Saint Lawrence O'Toole Parish Catholic Church. Uncle Al and Aunt Gin were my godparents and the Bishop quizzed the students to see what we had learned. I was glad he never called on me.

When we went to mass on Sunday, dad wanted to leave right after communion. Mom said we were supposed to stay until we were excused but dad didn't care.

My mom liked to tell the story about getting two Nixon banners from the local Republican campaign headquarters. They assumed she supported the Vice President, but she had other plans. She cut one apart and hung NIX in one upstairs window, ON in the middle window, and NIXON in the third.

Nix on Nixon.

When John F. Kennedy drove slowly down U.S. 30 right behind our house, a big motorcade, we stood in the backyard to watch. Kennedy pointed at our windows and laughed with somebody sitting next to him.

My first brush with politics.

When my youngest brother Tom was born, we moved again, this time to Elk Grove Village. Dad brought the whole family, Tom included, to

see his grandmother. She was 97 and liked to talk about County Cork where she was born. I did not pay much attention but I noticed how her white socks stretch tight over her big ankles.

My cousin was visiting from Arizona and we were playing in the smooth wood floor in the living room. The others were sitting around a couch in the middle room. The floor smelled a little of honey and it was spotless.

Timmy heard the siren first and we both ran to the front porch in time to see a huge ladder truck blasting its horn and racing up the street. There were fireman inside the truck and one fireman sitting on a chair at the back wearing bright clothes and a red helmet. I was going to be a fireman when I grew up.

I met my friend Mike at school and started going over to his apartment. His mom said it was ok. Mike had some amazing model ships and airplanes. His dad did not live there but Mike and his dad glued everything together and carefully painted each part before putting on the decals. I tried a few easier kits but my ships never came out perfect like theirs.

Mike taught me some crazy things. We climbed in a window into the storage room of a restaurant at the shopping center. There were closed on Sundays. There was a huge barrel filled with coconut scrapings. I loved the taste of coconut but after a handful or two it was too

sweet. A wrinkled newspaper on the table said Marilyn Monroe had just died, or something like that. We smoked cigarettes but it made me cough and feel dizzy.

Mike showed me how to steal stuff from Ben Franklin at the mall. We would each take one of their best Tonka toys, walk past the cash registers and run around the back. My heart raced every time we did it. I heard about two teenagers who walked out of another store carrying a big canoe but we never tried anything that big.

One day my mom asked me about the five or six shiny new Tonka toys on the shelf in my room. I had to say something fast so I said they were Mikes. She said I needed to return them to Mike. Mike came up with bringing them back to the loading dock in the back of the store and dump them there. Mike always had smart ideas.

Mike and I decided to run away to Saint Louis. We had food, two canteens and a map. We stayed several hours in an outhouse in the forest at the edge of town. We got bored and went back to the bowling alley. My dad found us there. I had to ditch a pack of Parliament cigarettes before he drove both of us home. I never told my parents about running away but I got in trouble anyway.

After a snow, we threw snowballs at the school buses when they drove past. They were easy targets but we got in trouble for that too. At least

we did not put rocks in the snowballs. We just wanted to scare the kids when a snowball exploded on the window.

One day we were in the back of the shopping center and we started a little fire in a dug out hole with boxes they were throwing away. An assistant store manager called the police. I ran away but the patrol officer found me walking home. Mike was in the back seat. The officer drove me home and told my parents we had started a fire. I guess the restaurant there had a bad grease fire not too long ago so everyone was real jumpy about fires. That night, my mom called Mike's mom and they both agreed we could not hang out any more. Mike ended up moving somewhere so we weren't even in school together.

That was my first brush with the law, but I came close to a second. Shane and I spent a Sunday riding our bikes near a construction site on the far side of the subdivision. Racing home at sunset, he smashed into the bumper of a parked car. I skidded to a stop behind him.

That night, Shane's father discovered that Shane had been injured badly enough to need stitches. Shane told him I had hit him with a stick.

Mom took me to Shane's house that evening. His parents stood around his chair while my mom asked me to explain what happened.

When I finished, Shane started crying and admitted I was telling the truth.

He got grounded for a month. Whenever I came over after that, his mother watched me through a parted curtain. But we were friends.

I was still seven years old when I flew in an airplane by myself from Chicago to Saint Louis. I would stay with Aunt Virginia and the rest of the family would drive down in a couple of weeks for an extended vacation. I remember sitting next to the window in the plane. I waived to my parents but they couldn't see me. A little girl sitting next to me so the stewardess could keep an eye on two children without a parent. I was not worried because my dad told me he had the best pilots fly the plane.

About halfway from Chicago O'Hare to Lambert in Saint Louis, one jet engine gave out. We had to turn around, fly back to O'Hare and get on another plane. Aunt Gin must have been worried sick because our plane was delayed a couple of hours. They seated us the same on the second plane and I told the stewardess I saw flames coming out of the engine. She told me that was normal for propeller planes and shut up because I was upsetting the other passengers.

If there were a better place on earth than the house Uncle Al built, I'd never seen it. They never had children of their own but their corner lot was swarming with children from the

neighborhood. Cousin Larry would play a bongo drum and hike his platoon of boys to Creve Coeur Lake and back. We were sure to avoid poison ivy. We played Tripoli on Aunt Virginia's huge mahogany table. Behind us stood a matching cabinet with glass doors and porcelain plates inside. If you sat at the right angle, you could see another player's cards reflected in the glass.

That was cheating, of course. But not as obvious as dealing yourself a royal flush from a stacked deck.

We'd play hardball out back with a huge cottonwood tree marking the right-field foul pole. Aunt Gin had been a star athlete in high school and traveled the country during World War II playing women's baseball while many of the men were overseas. She was left-handed, like me, and brought out her claw mitt when the teenagers talked her into playing first base.

When the thermometer hit 100, I would sneak into Gin's cool basement to play chess with David Flotron. I stared at her box turtle, hoping he might warn me before I made a blunder.

It was a long drive back to Chicago and I did not look forward to school. After school, a babysitter sat with us until mom and dad got home. One day he stood in the bathroom watching me when I was undressed. I wasn't

afraid, but I did feel embarrassed about my naked body.

The other time I felt like that was after a school assembly. I was collecting books from my locker when an older bully and two friends stopped me. He punched me low in the belly, books skidding across the hallway. They walked away laughing. It felt like his fist was still buried inside me but it wasn't pain that mattered. Some girls from my class had seen everything.

One day I slipped in the kitchen and drove my front teeth into my gums. In my memory, the novocaine didn't work and the dental procedure was horrific. I knew I could never be a doctor. I couldn't handle that much pain. Whenever I smiled, I tried not to show the bridge on my teeth.

Always a class clown, I would pretend to be George Washington and Abe Lincoln whose pictures hung on the walls of the classroom. I kept my lips from moving and our young teacher could never figure out who was talking in class. On the last day of school we went outside for second period and she said I could do my imitation of Harry Carey and Jack Buck announcing a baseball game. I liked the attention but, quickly running out of material, I stopped.

The day before my birthday, I walked home from school for lunch and watch a Bozo the

clown rerun on the TV. An announcer interrupted to say President Kennedy had been shot. That weekend I watched the funeral, hour after hour, sprawled on the carpet with my legs stretched under the couch. Then and there, I vowed to become president and, if need be, give my life helping others just like JFK.

We had a big Magnavox console in the living room. I did not like my parents' albums, like the Ink Spots, but the second track on one album had "Greensleeves.". It was so beautiful I played it over and over. I was excited when I brought my first album home, *Beatles '65*, tore off the from lightning three hundred miles away, but I could picture each at bat. In the '64 World Series, Lou Brock became my hero. I could not hit like Lou or run like Lou, but when he walked up to the plate, I prayed for a hit and another stolen base.

The Sandman didn't return, but I had lots of other dreams. In the happy ones, gravity let go. I floated down flights of stairs and over grassy hills without feeling my own weight. The night my dad ran security for the Beatles at Busch Stadium, I dreamed I was there beside him in the rain.

I made Boy Scout second class and the boys in my squad gave each other Mohawk haircuts. Our parents and the scoutmaster were not pleased but, oh well, it was a hoot.

On the far side of a big field behind our house in Arlington Heights stood a radio tower until, one night, a tornado twisted it into a pretzel. My brothers were scared looking at the wreckage from our kitchen window, even more so when Mom explained how a tornado tore off the top of their house when she was a baby.

I saw a puppy in the front window of a pet store. Taffy was part beagle, part collie. I begged my dad to bring her home. He did. I loved her so much and she loved me. Before long, she got sick. She had a fever, her eyes watered and she was always tired. The veterinarian said she had distemper. There wasn't much we could do. We gave her as much love as we could. She just looked at me with her beautiful eyes while I rubbed her tiny rib cage and made her feel so good. That night I slept downstairs on the couch and she slept in her puppy bed on the floor near me. When I woke in the morning, she had died trying to get up onto the couch with me.

I could not stop crying. I miss her so much.

The first day of sixth grade helped a little. Finding the bus stop, going to a new school, anything to get my mind off of Taffy. Mrs. Dvorak paced between the rows of students and told us what she expected for that school year. As strict as she was, I will never forget her class.

Mrs. Dvorak tacked large sheets of paper across the back wall. Each student had a column,

with our names written at the bottom. Down one side she listed dozens of tasks: memorize the prepositions, recite a poem, read a novel, find the book and page for a photocopied page from a book in the library. When a student completed a task, she would mark an X on his column for that task.

School started to look like a chess game. I knew how to win. The Xs in my column climbed like a skyscraper. I drew *Vanity Fair* and, after one girl drew *War and Peace*, we both grumbled.

One of the last tasks was to research about ancient Greece, write a paper and explain it to the class. I found the Persian Wars in the World Book set: Marathon, Salamis, Themistocles, Aristides. The names sounded carved from stone. What caught me was not Athens or philosophy but a few Greeks fighting so many Persians. One battle in particular.

In 492 BC, the rank and file of Greek warriors assembled into a phalanx and watched a fleet of 300 Persian ships rounding the southern peninsula of Mount Athos. The calm seas soon erupted into a northerly gale, unfurling the Persian sails and casting the ships headlong toward the shore. The Greeks faced into the wind bitten rain, ready for combat against far superior numbers. But this battle between Greeks and Persians was not to be. The ships

never reached shore as the tempest smashed them into bits against the jagged rocks.

The unforgiving waves claimed the lives of nearly 20,000 Persians, but not life itself. For in an ebb between the swells, amid human carnage, a solitary bird grasped onto a piece of floating wreckage. A brilliant white dove. Soon several birds, then dozens, escaped their watery hold. All of a sudden, all at once, they took flight. Their soft wings brushed against white capped waves, soaring upward and homeward, ever in unison, until they faded into the dark horizon. Never before had the Greeks seen such birds. They told all who would listen about the shipwrecks and the doves. Each bird, they said, was the loving soul of a sailor lost at sea.

In 1864 a Spaniard returned from Cuba to write the song *La Paloma* about those white doves: “if to your window arrives a dove, treat her with kindness for she is my persona.” Two years later he died in obscurity, never to learn how his song would be sung around the world for centuries.

When I finished my talk, one hand raised. Then another. And a third. The girls mostly wanted to know about the doves and the song. The boys asked about the battles. I read a lot about this subject and could answer some of their questions. When I was done, Mrs. Dvorak clapped. So did several of the students, even a

couple of cool ones. I sat down, my face red hot with excitement.

That summer I found myself alone on a rainy day at Aunt Virginia's house. From the long low bookshelf in the dining room, I pulled out *To Kill a Mockingbird*. After everyone returned, I retreated to my bedroom, skipped dinner and kept reading. Scout watched her father Atticus defend Tom, a Black man accused of raping a young white woman. It was obvious to me, if not the jury, that Tom was innocent.

After the verdict, Scout and the Black congregation watched from the balcony as Atticus gathered his papers and turned to leave. Reverend Sykes leaned over and whispered, "Miss Jean Louise, stand up. Your father's passin'."

Everyone stood.

I cried reading that passage. I vowed to be like Atticus when I grew up.

The next winter, the Big Snow hit Chicago. My dad was stranded downtown for two days. When Mom and I raised the garage door, we stared at a wall of snow except for a corner wedge of daylight. When our Boy Scout troop hiked to a local store for groceries, I stood taller than some of the street signs. It took days to shovel through the drift. Once we reached the street, a diesel truck plowed our street and left a ridge of snow across every driveway. When they

threw the first pitch at Wrigley Field in AprilP,
we were still playing in our snow castle.

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III—WEST IS BEST

DEATH BROUGHT US HOME.

A farmer, plowing his field near Readsville, Missouri, noticed the wreckage underneath a grove of cottonwoods.

My cousin Judith was nineteen. She worked for a local dentist, Charles Johnson. Dr. Johnson owned a small plane and was flying to Las Vegas for a convention. Her parents were already there, taking their first vacation in twenty years. Dr. Johnson offered to take Judith along with her one-year-old daughter, Tammy Sue, her younger sister Donna, and their little brother Scooter. James Pikey, Judith's husband, had to stay back because of his job.

It was supposed to be a surprise.

The plane took off from Saint Louis but never landed in Las Vegas.

For eight days, the entire family waited and worried. Searchers looked along the flight path to Las Vegas and beyond. California. Mexico. Anywhere a small plane might have gone down. The newspapers and television asked, was it a kidnapping? I just prayed for my four cousins to be found somewhere, for God to keep them safe and sound.

The plane never went west.

Near Readsville, Missouri, the engine caught fire. Dr. Johnson tried to land in a field but the plane slid into a stand of trees. Search planes passed overhead and saw nothing. The plane was too well hidden.

Judith was dead. Her baby Tammy Sue.
Donna. Scooter. Dr. Johnson.

It was also the end of Chicago for us. After eight days of searching, grief when their bodies were found, phone calls and the big funeral, we knew where we belonged. We belonged in Saint Louis. With grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, cemeteries, and people who knew who we were.

It was time to move back home.



While we waited for our house to be built, we moved from Aunt Virginia's home into a nearby apartment. Gin was waiting for her second child through the Indian Adoption Service, and the agency might question two families living under

one roof. Mom was confined to bed during her fourth pregnancy. Nicole was stillborn.



My parents worked day and night at their companies, Alert Security and Costello Usher Company. Alert had just started up. Grandpa Lou had been running the usher company but he was growing more and more senile. Their long hours meant Tom and I were on our own, bicycling around the neighborhood after school, playing sandlot baseball, spending as much time as I could with other families. Mine was so boring.



Sometimes when I walked home from school, I would play a silly game in my mind. If I counted one hundred steps before the next car passed by, I would live to be one hundred. It was a weird thing to do but it did make my walks go quicker. That was interrupted by a Chihuahua who saw me coming and chased me. No time to count steps with a tiny mutt nipping at my ankles.



Dad let my next-door neighbor William and me go to a Cardinals baseball game. Dad and I went to Mass first. Right after Communion, we left because Dad needed to get his ushers in place at every gate before they let the fans inside.

Somebody grabbed William's shoulder with one strong hand and my shoulder with the other. We both turned.

It was Mike Shannon, the star third baseman.

"What are you boys doing?" he asked in his gravelly voice.

"Mike Shannon!" William said.

I tried to think of something to say. "We're here with my dad."

Looking at William's new glove, he smiled and asked, "Don't you want me to sign that?"

"Could you?" William answered, holding it out.

Mike signed the glove and left toward the locker room.

William said, "I'm never going to wash my shoulder again!"

He didn't mean it, but I knew how he felt.



In October, Dad set me up in the press box to watch Bob Gibson pitch the first game of the 1968 World Series. There wasn't an empty seat in the stadium. Standing room only. Gibby struck out seventeen batters. I'd never seen anything like it. Somehow we lost the seventh game and the series to the Detroit Tigers.



One Saturday, Aunt Gin came over to watch me play baseball. We were one game behind the first-place Ellisville Giants and hosting them that

evening at Manchester Ballpark. Their left handed pitcher, a lanky youth my age, stared from the mound with his first-growth mustache, a man among boys. Not to mention a nasty fastball.

The game was scoreless with one out in the bottom of the last inning. Their lefty was still on the mound, throwing a no-hitter.

Coach barked out my name. I jumped off the bench with glove in hand.

“Steve,” he said, in a tense tone.

I turned and looked right at him.

“Not your glove.” He shook his head. “Your bat.”

I had figured he wanted me in the outfield for the extra innings. A left-handed batter never stood much of a chance against a lefty pitcher and, not just any southpaw--their ace who just struck out our first batter and was ahead in the count again.

I could barely swallow as I left the dugout. All I could think was getting beamed by one of his wild fastballs.

I did not even reach the on-deck circle when the umpire grunted, “Strike three!”

I don’t even remember walking to the plate and two strikes stung the catcher’s mitt before I could breathe. I looked at the umpire and stepped out of the box. I took off my dark red helmet. Beads of sweat cooled the top of my

scalp in the night air. I was not going to just stand there and watch that pitcher strike out the side. Out or no out, I was going down swinging.

I put my helmet back on and stood back in the box. I started my swing with all my might but the pitch was sailing off the corner of the plate. I reached for it and closed my eyes.

Crack!

The bat buzzed in my hands. Somehow, some way, I punched the ball between the shortstop and third baseman into left field, a fluke single that shattered my bat.

I took a small lead off first base and watched the pitcher's face. He just lost his no-hitter and the cocky smile that went with it.

I took a tiny lead off the base. One throw over but I easily danced back in.

Vic, our leadoff hitter, stood at the plate. When the pitcher threw to first, Vic dug a hole with his cleats like a proud colt clawing at the ground with one hoof before a mad gallop.

I dusted the dirt off the side of my white knickerbockers and the Cardinal red stirrup above my ankle. Another throw over. This time, I had one cleat hugging the bag. Why throw to first, I thought to myself, if the runner is still on the base. I guess that's why I smiled at the pitcher.

He made a short windup and pitched home. It got away from him, sailing high and inside

toward Vic. Vic yelped and dove back as the catcher grunted and lunged.

I took off for second and heard a loud clank as the ball struck the backstop. The catcher ran the ball down, wheeled, cocked it behind his right ear but stopped.

He glared in my direction but didn't throw it. I was standing on second base and, like a Cheshire cat, I grinned right back at him. I was so nervous I could barely think but his pitcher looked rattled too.

The catcher shook his head, asked for time and walked toward the mound with the ball in his mitt. The infielders joined in the huddle.

I stood on second base, looked around and saw how shallow the outfielders were playing. In the last inning of a close game, if a runner on second scores, that's the ball game. On a sharp single, they were shallow enough, with a good throw, to throw me out at home.

They were still standing on the mound when the ump waved them off. I could not see the ball but I knew what they were doing. If I took a lead off second, the shortstop would sneak behind me and tag me out. The old hidden ball trick.

Our first base coach yelled to me from his spot in foul territory, "Stay on the bag!"

I nodded yes. I was the winning run standing on second, and Vic could drive me in. Don't mess this up.

The shortstop tossed the ball underhanded back to the pitcher. They hardly noticed Vic tapping the plate with his bat.

After ball two, the third pitch was the charm. The southpaw hung one over the middle of the plate and Vic smashed it on the sweet part of his bat. He pulled a clean hit to left.

I took off. Before I reached the third base coach, he was wheeling his arm, waving me home. I rounded third and ran for my life. I could not see anything behind me, but I could hear all the noise. Our dugout screaming. Our next batter chopping both hands toward the dirt.

“Slide!”

The catcher crouched, his mitt ready for the ball. Behind him, the umpire bent, hands on his knees. I slid with my right foot forward. I never saw the throw.

Time stood still.

The umpire’s arms shot out.

“Safe!”

We won!

My teammates poured out of the dugout like crazed zombies. Boys piling on boys. I was looking for Vic through all the arms and legs.

The umpire took off his mask and walked off the field. We broke up a no-hitter, scored the only run of the ballgame and beat Khoury League’s best team in the last inning.

Our coaches were so happy they ordered ice cream cones for everyone. Even Aunt Gin got one, and a cream soda too.



I checked out two books from the library. One was a business law textbook filled with court opinions. The other was entitled *So You Want to Be a Lawyer*. I understood perhaps a tenth of what I was reading, but it opened a whole new universe. Judges settled disputes with clever paragraphs. Arguments mattered. Words mattered.

The second book was less dry and easier to follow. It recommended English, speech, and debate. Those were already my favorite classes. I closed the book and wondered if someone had written it just for me.

Mr. Berger taught English. He would close his eyes and become the character. Cyrano de Bergerac. Quixote. Speaking extemporaneously, he revealed their innermost thoughts, dreams and ambitions. I had never seen anything like it. With little more than words and imagination, he taught us to understand what motivates characters both fictional and real.

Mr. Shafer, the Bear, ran the speech and debate program. In my first interscholastic competition in Illinois, I memorized an eight-minute speech about America's immigrants. I went last in the final round, leaving the two

judges and me in an empty classroom. I did OK. At the awards ceremony in the auditorium, they announced I had won first place in oratory. In my excitement, I fell down walking up to the stage for my trophy. Mr. Shafer told our speech class on Monday that my head had grown so big, I fell over. It was true.



When Dad had a little free time, he would hit fly balls to the outfielders on my baseball team or play catch with me. After practice one day, on our way home, he said I should get along with Mom. I explained how our star football player had ridden on my bus after school but she would not let him borrow our telephone to call his parents. I was so angry at her. It was the only time I could think of my dad giving me advice, father to son. He was so quiet and reserved. I knew he loved me. He was proud of me. I loved my dad but I barely knew him.

When Dad was a boy, he wanted to become an architect. As a hobby, he liked to design and build three-dimensional art. One piece had the masks of tragedy and comedy surrounded by symbols of the performing arts. For his father, Dad designed a large mural of a bull and a bullfighter with a red cape. Each section was bounded by a slender wire glued to plywood, and within each section, he glued tiny pebbles of the same color.

Grandpa Lou came to our house and Dad presented him with the finished piece. It was awesom. Lou looked at it, snarled, and flung it across our family room floor. Some of the colored pebbles fell off.

Afterward, Dad repaired the loose pebbles and hung the Bullfighter in our basement.



I cut a tiny Charles Atlas advertisement out of a magazine. It promised big muscles and six-pack abs. I studied the picture, folded the coupon, and did the exercises religiously.

One day in sophomore history class, two football linemen grabbed my shirt and pulled it over my head. I got hot fast, ready to fight. There were whistles. Someone said I didn't look half bad, and a girl agreed.

I pulled my shirt back on, still angry, but not as angry as before.



I played Percy, the boy slave, in *The Miracle Worker*. Helen Keller signed w-a-t-e-r into my hand, and I screamed, "Lemme go, lemme go!"

Nothing in rehearsal prepared us for opening night when the audience roared with laughter and applause at that line. Were they laughing at Percy or releasing all the tension that had built until Helen finally understood the connection between the signs in her hand and the water

itself? We didn't know for sure but, by the third night, we expected the outburst.

After the performance, the only Black family in the audience walked past me. I waved. The boy waved back.

IV—MR. PRESIDENT

1967 - 1972 Chap 3: West is Best
Ballwin/Parkway 5 Stolen Base
Cardinals Spoonriver Tami Percy
Chuck BerryRan for Student Council Wait til
you have a son of your own IV—Mr.
President

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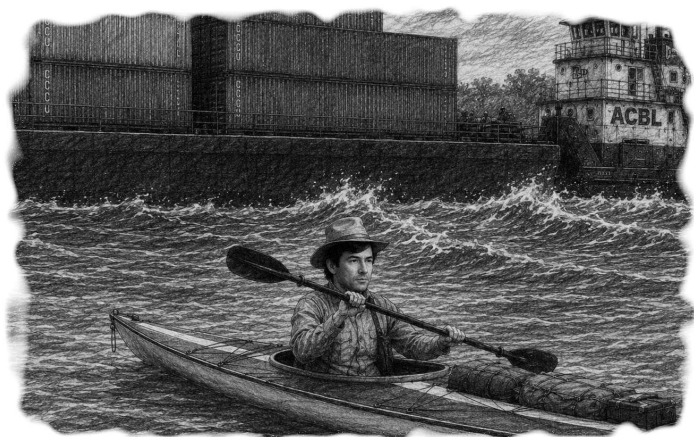
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V—PROUD MARY

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Change Name

Admiral Proud Mary

Nurse Hand

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Father Christmas

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VI—THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

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Confession	Augsburg	3	TJAGSA
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falls out "Lennon

Watching WHEELS

6 The Augsburg Confession

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VII—THE OXFORD CROSSING

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Caspar rejection Greenham
Commons Death comes "Jump
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VIII—THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

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Defender Public Defender 6 Cloyd Hall
Cases CRASH DREAM State Pen Class Softball
Losing my Religion Madrid

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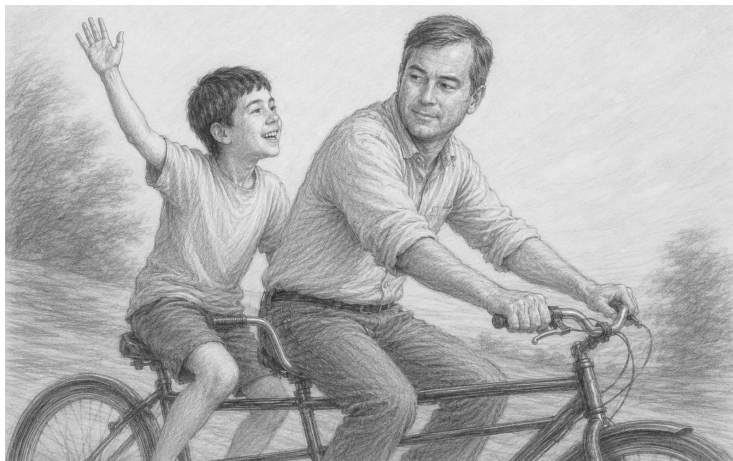
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IX—TRES CRUCES

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Marisa Ian 0-18yo Torreon Champs
Stand by You NACDL Show not Tell Tres
Cruces Cabo George Harrison

I wrote these lyrics to the melody of HAL's
swan song, *Daisy, Daisy (Bicycle Built for Two)*:

Ian, Stephen,
all of the live-long day.
Life's so pleasin',
"thank God for all this," we say.
When the goin' gets rough, remember,
my daddy loves me tender.
We'll sing this song
as we ride along

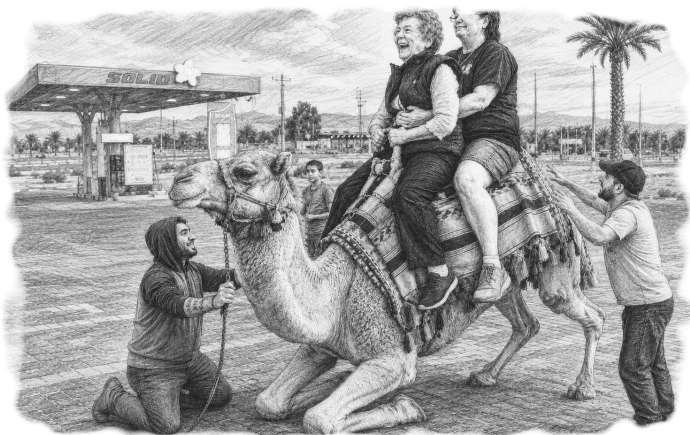
in a bicycle built for two.

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X—STILL WATERS

The conductor slid open the door and switched on the light.

“Sir, we’re just a few minutes out of Milan,” he said in English, knowing it was our stop.

I blinked and sat up. Across from me, Ian was already awake.

We gathered our things and waited for the train to stop.

Milan. INSERT

xXdd

10	2014	-	2026	Chap 10: Still Waters
To Present	12			Teddye Ian 18-30
Steph Evander				Now and Then Athena Baby

You were ninety when we went to Jerusalem with your church group,” I said.

She looked at me.

“You rode a camel?” I asked, leaning on the word *camel*.

“Did I?” she said.

I glanced at the photo I had pasted on the wall beside her bed. She sat perched on the saddle as the camel lurched up, gripping harder as it came to its feet. She couldn’t quite reach Jerusalem on her own. Once I filled in the details, she smiled at the photograph and held tight to my words, at least for a while.

The next visit I pasted another picture: her father and mother, her brothers Art and Lester, her sister Virginia, standing in a row for a picture at her cousin’s wedding.

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EPILOGUE—DÉJÀ VU

The conductor slid open the door and switched on the light.

“Sir, we’re just a few minutes out of Milan,” he said in English, knowing it was our stop.

I blinked and sat up. Across from me, Ian was already awake.

We gathered our things and waited for the train to stop.

I looked down at my palm.

“Lemme go, lemme go.”

“What’s that?” Ian asked.

“Never mind,” I smiled. “There was this older couple sitting in the back of a large sightseeing boat.”

“Not another dad joke?” Ian said.

“Bear with me. It’s a short one.”

Ian kept quiet but did not make eye contact.

“As I was saying, this couple was sitting in the back of the boat, but they were starting to bug one another during their vacation.”

“I wonder why,” Ian said.

“Well,” I answered, “she could not stand his stinky cigars, and he hated the toy terrier she brought everywhere on the trip. They agreed to check out the front of the boat, but before they did, he flicked what was left of his cigar into the water, and she tied the dog near the back of the boat on a leash.

“They were almost to the front section when they could not believe their eyes. That little mutt was sitting next to the bow. And you’ll never guess what the dog had in his mouth.”

“The cigar,” Ian said, half amused.

“No. The brick!” I said.

After a second, Ian moaned. “That’s even worse than last night’s joke.”

“Actually, they’re two parts to one joke.”

“Two unfunny parts,” he said.

“Just wait, son. Wait until you have daughters of your own. Only then will you understand what I’m saying.”

“Daughters?” he interrupted. “Why daughters?”

I looked again at my hand.

“To be honest?” I said. “I don’t know.”

Further Reading

The phrase “Doe of the Dawn” comes from the superscription to Psalm 21 (22), where many translations treat Aijelet Hashahar as a musical direction, likely naming the tune to which the psalm was once sung, though the melody itself has been lost.

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2001: A Space Odyssey. Directed by Stanley Kubrick and released in 1968, the film uses “Daisy Bell” in one of its most haunting scenes, as the computer HAL 9000 slowly loses his voice and memory. The scene gives the old bicycle song an uncanny second life: sentimental, mechanical, innocent, and tragic all at once.

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About the Author

Stephen D Aarons is a criminal defense attorney, former Army JAG officer, photographer, husband, father, grandfather, and author. He has practiced law in New Mexico for more than four decades and lives with his wife, Doris, in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

He is the father of Ian, father-in-law of Stephanie, grandfather of Athena Jade Aarons, and eagerly awaiting the arrival of another grandchild.

Doe of the Dawn is his first memoir.

The rest, you now know.

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NOTE DRAFTS

I used to hate when my dad would choose a path of least resistance, an invisible father steI would argue with him:

“Are you even a part of this family? You don't even know what we're talking about, do you?”

I don't think my dad answered me. If he did, I wasn't listening. Thomas Fuller once said “a hypocrite is in himself both the archer and the mark.” His gallows humor finally hits me. With my father I was the archer; with my son I am the mark, the bulls-eye. I react to Ian exactly how my father reacted to me. I enable Ian instead of confronting his temper tantrums for what they are. What's worse: he's an adult now. This whole trip is his rite of passage. It's too late to undo; what's done is done.

Shortcomings aside, I grab a corner table. Opening my notebook, I try to share Hemingway's distraction at people passing by. Some are young, some attractive, others less so. Thoughts drift to Beatles t-shirts, posters and iconic symbols. They are everywhere. Fifty years ago, the foursome from Liverpool captured the imagination throughout the free world and beyond. I recall buying my first album, Beatles '65, from the Ben Franklin store, a local five and dime just blocks from home. I ran inside our living room, tore the clear plastic cover off and slid the LP out of the cardboard cover. I removed the paper sleeve and opened up the hardwood cabinet of our Magnavox console. The shiny black vinyl smelled brand new. A hole in the center of the record snapped into a bump, dead center on the turntable. I switched the speed from 45 to 33 revolutions per minute, the record spinning like a spiral. Trying hard not to scratch it, I gently lowered the needle-shaped diamond stylus onto the outermost groove. The speakers popped in anticipation. I turned the volume up and played the first side, then the second, and then the first side all over.

My dad, Don, guarded the four shaggy haired musicians for one night at Busch Stadium. Like his grandson Ian, dad was born an only child. Grandpa Lou left Gram Florence and dad after dad's third birthday. Lou used his gravel voice to belittle dad even after he became an adult. Once dad spent countless hours gluing tiny string and pebbles onto a hard backing. Slowly, from a chaos of colors, an inspired mosaic emerged of a proud bull as it passed alongside a graceful matador dressed in dark regalia. Lou ripped the carefully wrapped paper off and

glanced at his birthday present in disgust. Suddenly, Lou flung his present across the living room like a frisbee. Red stones depicting the matador's cape spun like a cartwheel until the outer frame crashed against the far wall, stray stones dancing onto the polished floor like a game of jacks. I expected to see surprise in my dad's eyes. In silence, I saw little or no expression.

In the hectic days leading up to the Beatles concert, even Lou knew it was time to retire. As dementia reared its ugly head; Don needed to take over Lou's usher company, and soon. Don was not quite ready to abandon Chicago when he left for Saint Louis to help Lou out with the big concert. Don was the general manager of a greeting card company and thought he had more time to decide what to do. The usher company had several hundred employees, mostly off duty policemen, and provided ushers at local sporting events and racetracks. One crisis after another hit the company as the concert approached. Don would have to tell us when he got back.

Don put on his blue and gold uniform and a raincoat. The word "Chief" was sewn onto the brim of his billed white cap hat. A clear plastic cover kept the hat from getting soaked by rain. Dad kept a poker face but he must have been nervous about his new company.

Years later Tom and I visited Don in Florida when his throat cancer was in remission. He drew on his pipe and talked about that first big concert. Heavy rains poured and water covered the grass outfield. Bad weather thinned an anticipated crowd of 50,000 to half that size. The \$5.00 tickets were pricey during a heavy rainstorm. But fans showed up screaming loud enough to drown out bad weather and good ole rock and roll.

"It was mass hysteria," Don explained. "People yelling close to the stage, lightning bolts crackling nearby. Walkie-talkies were useless." The Beatles were average looking, he thought, and average singing. "They couldn't hold a note like Sinatra, Andy Williams, Tony Bennett."

The Beatles, a half-dozen crew members, Don and one other usher stood underneath a makeshift shelter of corrugated iron. The stage area was dry for the first two sets but a leak started to drip behind the drums. Then a second leak dripped onto Harrison's 120-watt VOX amplifier. They

say “the show must go on” but, fearing possible electrocution, this gig shut down before the final set.

Don and several others escorted the Beatles behind the stadium until they jumped into the back of an empty van. Two police cars escorted the van to the hotel. Inside, everybody was sliding around trying to hold onto something. According to Paul McCartney in *Anthology*, during this ride John Lennon and George Harrison convinced him then and there to stop touring. And they did. As history bears out, this would be the last Beatles tour. It just wasn't worth the hassle.

DON AND MOM WORKED long hours when we lived in Chicago and, when we moved back to Saint Louis, they worked harder to get the usher company back on its feet. Years of Lou's mismanagement demanded their time and attention. If that wasn't trouble enough, they started a second company, Alert Security. Alert supplied armed guards for malls and office complexes. The two Saint Louis companies fit well together, many employees juggling hours in both.

With Don and Mom working day and night, Tom and I became latch key kids. You might find me inside to eat and sleep but, otherwise, I was hanging out with neighbor kids in our subdivision. We never worried about material things. We lived in a new house. A new motorboat sat in the garage. Two new cars were parked in the driveway. I showed up at a new junior high school in shiny new clothes. Don didn't drink and he was never abusive. I should thank God. Don earned good money, didn't hand out much fatherly advice and never reprimanded me. He never raised his voice or cried. I cannot recall him expressing strong emotions. I never doubted my dad loved me. He was proud of me as his oldest son but he was too emotionally distant to say so until late in his life. I don't remember but dad must have hugged me when I was little. We never got close. Don never let anyone get close. He complained that his job left him barely enough time to go to the bathroom, but being busy at work was a convenient buffer from intimacy. As a child Don learned that, if he didn't become attached to people, it didn't hurt so much when they left.

A line comes to mind from Harry Chapin's *Cat's in the Hat*: “When you comin' home, Dad? I don't know when,

but we'll get together then, son. You know we'll have a good time then."

I LOSE TRACK of time. Ian returns with two large paper bags bearing store insignia.

"What did you get?" I am curious at whatever lies hidden inside those bags. He pulls out clothes, cologne, stuff for his girlfriend and a couple of friends. Ian has a keen eye for what he wants.

Ian is having a good time. As the fab four once sang, "I feel fine."

The shadows begin to lengthen in the afternoon light. Ian is driving with less aggression now than he had on the way to Ireland. I drift into a dream of Paul McCartney and I doing a pantomime on a tiny stage in the park. Both of us are dressed like bums, and both walk the distinctive gait of Charlie Chaplain's little tramp. Paul shakes my hand and I pretend he has given me a quarter. With sleight of hand, Paul has my quarter again. Realizing his heist, I shame him for being so downtrodden as to steal my last quarter. Our decidedly British audience roars in delight, I imagine, because in truth Paul is so rich and famous.

I wake up, the gallery of smiling faces transforming into a rush hour stand of cars and trucks. It is too late to drive to Oxford. Ian and I have many miles ahead to our flat in London and it is slow going. On the way we decide, having conquered Ireland and England, to invade the continent of Europe at the break of dawn.

"Well," Ian hesitates, "maybe not that early. Teenagers need their sleep, you know."

"Old guys too."

CHAPTER THREE: THE DUTCH CONNECTION

NOT TOO EARLY the next morning Ian and I leave our flat, park the car and hop on the London Tube to Saint Pancras Station just north of the River Thames. The station was built in 1868. Recent renovations mix old with new. Someone is playing a piano near our platform, a delightful airy tune. The daily commuters push through the crowd, their faces lack expression, their minds bent on where they are going not where they are. They are driven forward by their intention to get somewhere without the distraction of architecture, music or the people stepping aside. Don't stand in their way. Our train heads north and east, under

the English Channel, and on to Brussels. After a while I can't tell if Ian is sleeping or listening to music with his earphones. I eavesdrop on some English musicians comparing notes about gigs in Britain and the mainland.

At the Brussels station we wait another hour for a connecting train to Amsterdam. At most airports and train stations the younger people crowd around electric outlets to recharge their phones. This isn't possible in Belgium. The only devices are several contraptions where you peddle a stationary bicycle which generates enough electricity to recharge your low battery. Green power sounds wonderful in theory, but forcing tourists to peddle for electricity is cruel and unusual.

"Are they serious?" Ian asks in disbelief. His battery is barely 20% when we must leave for our train.

Seated across from us on the Eurostar to Amsterdam are an American pilot and his son, a sophomore in college. The pilot tells us about their fortnight spent, as near as I can tell, walking around WWII battlegrounds in France. He marvels at how many places we visited in our first week.

"A lot of planning went into your trip?" the pilot asks in disbelief.

"Not really," I confess. "One day at a time."

The sophomore stares at his father without uttering a word. You don't need to read minds to decipher an "I told you so" look. The father turns away and stares out the window. I know that disgusted look only too well. The thought of our fellow travelers stomping around battlegrounds seems awful, and funny. But it's not polite to laugh out loud at another's expense. When my eyes cross Ian's we contain our smiles, barely. I don't look at Ian, or the Americans, and keep my poker face.

The rain in Spain, they say, stays mainly in the plain. In Amsterdam, it rains everywhere. No wonder they use water canals as roads. The locals bring umbrellas. Ian and I turn our faces down from the sheet of water and slosh to our hotel just across from the train station.

My high school buddy Rick Coughlin had planned to meet us Amsterdam, but the timing is bad. He's on the other side of the planet, visiting his young wife's family in the Philippines. We promise to do something to celebrate our Sixtieth birthdays, but not this trip.

Rick and I first crossed paths in high school debate. Our team won the state championship my senior year but I did not compete in oratory to protest the way Coach Shafer had touched one of the girls. A few years later he was fired for making advances on another troubled student.

Rick, his older brother Tim, Mark Saladino, Chris Bowling and I would gather at Rick's house to play Risk, a board game of strategy and world domination. Decades later Rick, Ian and I played Risk at Rick's house in Maine. We set up the cardboard board, a map of the world, on Rick's dining room table late into the night, everyone else sound asleep. The winning strategy for Ian was clear. Wait for Rick and I to pound one other into the ground, just like the good old days, and Ian's fresh troops easily conquers our smaller and war-wearied armies. Like two old war dogs, the certainty of losing to Ian seemed somehow better than allowing either one his day.

A LONG BOAT is moored for a few minutes for passengers to come and go. Ian and I hop on, hoping to circumnavigate the city in a single tour. Historic churches are still standing, but most have been converted into office buildings. Atheism is the dominant religion of Northern Europe, though no self-respecting atheist would ever agree that the denial of God is itself a religion. I chide scoffers by comparing their praise of noGod to our worship of God.

We stop next to the Anne Frank museum. The lines are too long for us to walk inside the office building where, for two years, this innocent 14-year old girl hid with her family from the Nazis and their Dutch collaborators. After the war her brother found her simple diary. Overnight it became known and cherished around the world. Despite constant fear of being discovered and killed like prey for the crime of being Jewish. Anne wrote these poignant words of encouragement: "I do not think of all the misery, but of the glory that remains. Go outside into the fields, nature and the sun, go out and seek happiness in yourself and in God. Think of the beauty that again and again discharges itself within and without you and be happy." Anne could not go outside into the fields, but we can.

"Will you help me set up over there?" I say to Ian, pointing to a sand barge moored across from the Frank museum. From the barge you can see a straight line of old

bridges, one after another. It takes a while for me to set up my tripod, but Ian is up to it. Patience is a learned virtue. A few tourists glance our way. An old man, his young assistant, a camera and a tripod in Amsterdam. Art in the making. I cannot say how good others will find my art but, good or bad, I am on course, going out, seeking happiness and beauty, within and without. Just as Anne encourages all of us to do.

That night I hide my concern as Ian leaves the room alone to explore the neighborhood. It is probably safe, but any father would worry about his American son strolling the red light district. "Don't take too long," I say, not the first time.

I fall into a hazy sleep on my bed and startle myself awake. I leave my room and walk toward the stairs, but the stairs are somehow different. People are mulling about dressed in fancy, odd clothing. No one pay attention to me, as if I am not there. I must be dreaming. I walk down the stairs, more like gliding down, and approach a beautiful young woman XXX PENALOPE

The next morning Ian reports his eerie journey into the night. "I found a couple good coffee shops. Everything smelled disgusting. They must have flushed out the canals because it is much better now. Some guy even whispered in my ear about some good cocaine to buy."

That startled me.

We return to the scene of the crime. The sun has set. The bricks on the streets are well worn, edges rounded and the surface smoothed by centuries of traffic. The night crowd is more intense than I expect, and I am a little embarrassed walking with my teenaged son. One young woman, dressed in a string bikini, struts on high heels inside a glass door not five feet from our path. A bare red light bulb shines just outside her door, and she is trying her best to lure a paying customer inside. I walk by, picking up my pace a little, relieved that no one opens her door until we pass. A red light in the Red Light District. I wonder why they prefer that color.

Ian stops. "There's that coffee shop."

One whiff inside would dispel any notion of people drinking coffee there. They come to buy a baggie of pot or other drugs. The huge variety of strands must be mind-

boggling to someone high or chronic users who disrupted one too many brain synapse over the years. We managed to buy a zip lock baggie of pot, weed as younger people call it, a few seeds, and smoke a joint on the way back to our hotel.

I feel awkward. "You'll never see people in America lighting up a joint in public."

Ian takes a selfie with his dad taking a drag from the joint.

"Don't ever post that on the internet," I plead.

We laugh. I'm a lightweight after one or two glasses of wine and I'm worse with weed, coughing as it burns the back of my throat. We laugh some more. Ian decides psilocybin is too risky in a foreign country. I agree.

I ask myself, does smoking a joint with Ian undercut stern lectures about how he was always getting high? "No duh," I blurt out.

"Say what?"

"Never mind. I'm just talking to myself."

Marijuana is less dangerous than alcohol and, on the weekends in college, I smoked my share. Unlike Bill Clinton, I even inhaled. But Ian smoked his way through his junior year of high school. Even now he considers school a scam. Weed may be to blame for some of his slacker ways.

Let's be honest. Ian and I picked Amsterdam because people can smoke here. Why else? I am glad to be smoking some weed with Ian on the trip. I really can't justify surrendering a part of my job as father to be his buddy, so it's a mixed bag. In this situation, a mixed baggie. It is what it is.

THE EUROPEAN UNION cashed out each member country's currency with Euros, but the native languages and idiosyncrasies remain as is. According to the old yarn, heaven has British police, French chefs, Italian lovers, German mechanics, and the Swiss make everything run on time; hell has British chefs, Swiss lovers, French mechanics, German police and the Italians make everything run on time. The Swiss and the Germans run their trains on time and, if today is any example, Dutch trains run as late as those in Italy. The train from Amsterdam arrives late in Mannheim, and Ian and I must sprint down the stairs, under several platforms, and up to our connecting train to

Munich. Instead of a leisurely hour between connections, we have seconds to climb into the rearmost railroad car in the nick of time. Sometimes the first class cars are to the rear. Today, by Murphy's law, we find ourselves at the wrong end. I had no time to map this out before we boarded, but we make do, each wheeling one large piece of luggage through the second class aisles. Three people are ahead of me, Ian the caboose, a merry line winding its way forward, nearly every seat occupied with daily commuters. We almost reach the first class car in front when, suddenly, a German man jumps up from his seat in the second row, cuts in front of me and stands there. The three ahead of me, having second class tickets, turn around to go back and search again for random seats behind us. They face the German. Ian and I are standing behind him. The man won't budge, his left hand gripping the back of one side of the front row seats and his right hand gripping the other side, spread eagle across the aisle.

"Bitte entschuldigen sie?" My German is rusty after decades in America, but that polite phrase to excuse me, please, comes to mind immediately.

The man says nothing, bowing his neck muscles. He must have heard me, I think, but maybe he didn't know I was speaking to him from behind.

"Entschuldigen sie, bitte?" I speak next to his ear, certain to be heard.

Still he doesn't budge or turn his head toward me.

I think about pressing my portly 250 pound frame against one of his arms like a lineman breaking through an arm block. I feel a twinge of righteous indignation, but remain calm. Ian and I, and anyone behind us, can stand if we must. It will only be until the next stop. I look behind. Ian seems calm enough, not as hot headed as I might have been at his age. The three passengers in front turn forward again and adjust to standing room only at the front of the car. I get a better look at the man. He is much younger than I thought, maybe 16, well built for his age, close cropped blond hair, a dress shirt with an ironed collar. Like my son, I am sure the girls find this boy handsome. Mine has a mixture of Irish, Italian, German, Spanish and Apache blood. This young man is pure Aryan. At this precise

moment, however, one is well mannered and the other is acting like a stubborn mule. A jackass.

I try to remember if the next stop is an hour away, or maybe less. At last a train conductor emerges from the first-class car, dressed in the fine uniform of his office, his metal whistle hanging from a chain around his neck. A single stray bag in the aisle would have irritated our good conductor. Imagine his reaction to a blockade of people.

“Was machen sie hier?” His voice booms with authority.

I reach over an outstretched arm with my ticket. The conductor recognizes my first class ticket and motions me toward the front. Saying nothing, I shake my head in agreement, open my palms and stare with a look of incredulity at the human obstacle between us. The conductor is in no mood for idle chatter, grabbing the youth under each armpit and lifting him up and over to one side. The boy instinctively releases both grips and, blushing with embarrassment, steps aside. I negotiate my luggage past the crestfallen youth, around three other passengers, and into the first-class section. Ian is right behind.

“What was that man doing?” Ian, sounding irritated, throws his gear onto the rack overhead.

“He was,” heaving my luggage up there, “only a boy.”

“Yeah and he was moved out of the way like a rag doll!” Ian exclaims, laughing it off.

In that instant, an odd impasse has become something humorous. With the benefit of a minute’s hindsight, I am glad I did not act out as I might have when I was younger. I have lost my composure plenty of times, the rush of testosterone and adrenaline just making matters worse. I remember an earlier time when I did not lose my composure, when I stayed calm like today. It was another summer concert at Busch Stadium. Superjam '76 was sold out, standing room only, 55,000 paying to see Ted Nugent, Jeff Beck, Fleetwood Mac and Jefferson Starship. Just nine days earlier, two hundred fans had been injured during a concert at the Pirates stadium in Pittsburgh. Some fans threw bottles, others were cut with broken glass. One security guard was hit with a bottle, another went to the hospital after being trampled. Hundreds of people swam in

the Ohio River. They found the body of a nude teacher floating face down. A hit-and-run driver ran over another woman.

Gussie Busch and the brass at Anheuser-Busch owned the stadium and wished they had never agreed to this rock and roll concert. They read reports from Pittsburgh and told dad to triple his crew. Everyone forgot the huge profits the stadium and Costello Usher stood to make. Our reputation was on the line, not to mention the safety of tens of thousands of drug crazed idiots. My dad pressured every available usher, guard and off-duty policeman to work that day.

There was no need to ask me. It was the summer between college and law school, and I was already working for my dad at Fairmount Race Track. It was a long commute but the wages were double any other part-time job. For the concert I spit shined my black dress shoes, neatly pressed my navy blue pants with gold stripes, black tie, a billed blue cap. The boss's son, I stood attention at one side of the stage, another usher stood at the other side. We looked like a proud pair of bookends, shiny Nutcracker soldiers on public display.

It was hot and humid, but no rain. The groundskeepers had thrown a heavy tarp over the infield and they were allowing fans to crowd close to the stage. Needless to say, we were a little nervous as the gates opened and people who had been waiting all night stormed toward us.

Everyone was well-behaved. Between sets, some guy whistled at a girl wearing a yellow tank top some distance away. She liked the attention that the bright color attracted, and stares from near and far at her tanned and sleek torso. She waved back at him and he screamed in excitement. I looked in the direction of the noise. The guy must have been stoned. He climbed onto a back row of red stadium chairs. He grabbed at a steel mesh housing an expensive television camera. The camera was bolted to the ceiling, aimed at the field for sporting events.

"What the hell," I muttered out loud.

The guy managed to get one corner of the housing loose, and was trying to bend the metal in one direction and then the other until it would break from fatigue. Even

today network cameras are very expensive, probably more so back then. I could not let him break into the compartment, so I walked through the crowd and up the grandstand section to a main pillar of the stadium. I began to climb several levels up, barely breaking a sweat when I reached the guy. I grabbed him by the back of his psychedelic Dead t-shirt. He let go of the metal container and dangled by his feet for a second before jumping a short distance to the concrete floor. I was still holding onto something with my other hand to keep my balance. He looked up at me.

“Run.” I stared down at him. His eyes looked weird and confused. “You better run!” I yelled. Two guards and a police officer reached me just as the guy slipped into the crowd.

I had to say something. “He got away.”

They ran off in several directions but never tracked him down. As I retraced my steps, I became aware of otherwise bored fans watching my King Kong spectacle. It looked farther down, the descent taking a lot longer than the ascent, one foothold at a time. A few fans nearby started clapping because I had let the guy go. It was a split second decision, one that later would bring me a lot of ribbing.

Just before the Fleetwood Mac set, my dad and an usher captain in a white cap checked up on me by the side of the stage

“Your dad’s stoned!”

Both of them were. As quickly as they came, they left. We never discussed the only time I ever saw my dad under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Given what had happened during the concert in Pittsburgh, my dad getting high while supervising hundreds of law enforcement personnel, well, it seemed stupid. Then again, who am I to judge?

He never told me but I am sure he was proud of his oldest son going to law school. But that meant I would not follow in his footsteps as he had his father. I would not take over the family business. We both understood that unspoken truth. What I did not know then was that dad, suffering from bipolar disorder, was beginning to make choices unlike any before. Soon he would leave mom for a

woman my age, move to Florida and start a new life. The dad I hardly knew would soon leave.

The crowd stayed mellow throughout the eight hour concert. Getting that guy arrested would have been ugly. If there were any injury reports, they were minor. My ego urged me to arrest that weird guy and, just minutes ago, to push past the German youth. Shakespeare's Falstaff, ever the jester, said it well: "Discretion tis the better part of valour."

The conductor enters the first-class car and slowly walks up the aisle, inspecting each passenger's ticket. I turn my gaze beyond the panoramic countryside beyond the railroad tracks and begin to remember from my studies two ancestors who once farmed these old Saxon soils. I recall a census book from 1880, exactly fifty horizontal lines per page, one line per person, vertical bars with just enough space for name, place of birth, age, occupation. The handwriting is elegant and easy to read, written with some measure of pride. Suddenly a horse and buggy rumbles over a railroad track and the planks of a small bridge over Labadie Creek, not far from the Mississippi River. It is early summer in the farmlands of Missouri. The horse snorts. A smartly dressed young man outside a whitewashed farmhouse, gets down, smooths his smart vest after a country ride, collects his briefcase, and walks up three steps to a side door that people always take for the front. He knocks briskly on the wooden frame of the weathered screen door.

"Excuse me," says the man, squinting through the screen at a dark figure inside, "may I trouble you for a minute?"

"What's this about?" answers a voice inside, followed by a faint shuffle of porcelain dishes. An elderly woman emerges from the shadows, wiping her hands on a white apron, daylight striking her blue, handmade dress, her hand reaching to unhitch the metal hook from the door.

"Yes, ma'am," as he sidesteps around the screen door as it creaks open, holding his briefcase by one hand and, by the other, grabbing the brim of his hat as a gesture of respect. "I'm Johnny Pope with the United States Census Bureau," he explains with some measure of pride, "and we need to take count of everyone living here."

"I see," she replies, not fully understanding but not the least worried, either. She notices Mr. Pope fidget with his stiff-crowned hat. "Have a seat," she adds, gesturing toward the kitchen table, "if you're staying a while..."

"Thank you." He quickly sets his hat on the table, sits down at one of the wooden chairs, and snaps open his shiny new leather briefcase. Reaching in for a large bound notebook, "I'll only be a few minutes." First pausing to read something from his papers, he looks up. "Are you Mrs. Steinagle?"

"No," she replied. "I am Mrs. Gabler, Caroline Gabler. My daughter was Julia Sternaugle, but she died several years ago."

"I am sorry to hear that," his voice suggesting more compassion than she expected. "Where were you born?"

"Russia," she smiles, her accent giving her away. "Saint Petersburg. Born in 1804 and my parents ..."

"They are deceased?" he interrupts.

"Yes, but I was going to say they were Russians too."

"Ah very good. And your husband?"

"Mr. Gabler? Mr. Christoph Gabler. He was, as you say, deceased. Chris left Saxony at the age of 20 and went all the way to Saint Petersburg, where I lived. We were young and in love. It was like history repeating itself when my daughter Julia met her husband."

"How so?"

"John was in his early Twenties, about the same age as Chris when we first met. John came from Saxony, like Chris, but Julia spoke German better than I ever did. I'm not that good with other languages."

"Your English is very good, ma'am."

"Well, as I was saying, both men had lots in common. Julia had her first baby in Saint Petersburg but, when my Chris died, there was nothing there for us. John, Julia, me and little Freddy -- Frederich, the baby -- we left Russia in search of a better life."

"Frederich. Did you come to America?"

"Not at first, no. The four of us went to Saxony, back to the town where Simon was born, but there were no jobs anywhere to be found. So many were fleeing to America and we decided we better too."

"So all four of you went to America?"

“Let’s see. It was five by then. Julia had a baby wherever we went. Freddy in Russia, Little John in Germany, Willy in Wisconsin and then the two girls here in Missouri.” She looked at Mr. Pope, a whimsical smile forming on her lips, “am I going too fast?”

“No,” he said. “I’m keeping up,” scribbling down in the book with one hand and massaging his temple with the other. “So the three boys are living on the farm?”

“Oh, no. The two oldest have families of their own. William is still helping John with the farm.”

“Sternagle?”

“Right. Everyone’s a Sternaugle, except me. S-t-e-r-n-a-u-g-l-e. Got it?”

“Got it. And the two girls?”

“Speak of the devil!” Caroline raised her voice with some joy, grabbing the waist of a young girl who appeared in the room out of curiosity. “This is my youngest grandchild, Johanna.”

Johanna makes an awkward smile, trying to yank away from Caroline’s grasp, a bit self-conscious, silky blond hair covering her shy eyes.

Johanna’s dress is the same blue color as her grandmother’s, almost grey blue, the same cloth, no doubt sewn by the same hands.

“How old are you?” Mr. Pope asks, starting to write on another line in his book, not looking up in spite of her natural beauty or, perhaps, because of it.

“Sixteen,” Johanna smiles, somewhat awkward even for her age.

Caroline interjects, “You missed her sister Maud -- Mathilda. She just left with their dad. Plenty of chores for both girls but Maud would rather ride into town with John and Willy than stay here with bossy old gramma. Can’t say as I blame her,” refusing to let Johanna go, hugging her a little tighter despite the fuss.

“...Tickets?”

“Dad! The tickets!” Ian startles me and then, miffed at my grogginess, grabs the tickets from the little stand and quickly hands them to the conductor, the same one who had cleared a path for us a while earlier.

Despite the rude awakening, my droopy eyelids instantly return to the farmlands beyond the tracks and the

dreams of my ancestors. Johanna was my mother's mother's mother, and Caroline her mother's mother, a maternal line stretching two centuries. Chris and John both came from Germany, one after the other, not far from these tracks, and both married in Saint Petersburg. How hard life must have been without trains or cars or modern conveniences. Missing from this story are untold hardships that drove them from Germany to Russia and back, across the Atlantic, down the Mississippi on flatboats and long poles. The same hunger and sickness and desperation drove millions to America, its hope for a new beginning in a new world. They found it farming fertile soil beside the river and, by chance, they escaped one world war, more economic collapse, the Nazis, a second world war more terrible than the first, and the Iron Curtain.

Glancing at the train timetable, I try one last time to see things from Caroline's eyes, her odyssey, her courage to abandon her fatherland, to let go and be swept halfway around the world. I can only try.

Johnny Pope jotted down his last note and rode to the next farmhouse, and the next, until the setting sun. And when the census ended, his book collected dust on some shelf until, more than a century later, it was scanned into its digital format. These lines on page 50 were absorbed into an almost infinite internet. Caroline's life, her thoughts, loves, fears, dreams, memories, all were ground into dust by the relentless press of time and tide. Our story will soon be lost, like hers, lost in a forgotten past.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

A QUIET HANDFUL of passengers sit in the first-class coach. I look at a map and quickly change our plans from the morning. We should get off the train in Augsburg, one stop before Munich, instead of doubling back there with a rental car later on. Ian is disappointed because he wanted to rent a sports car in Munich and drive the autobahn, a mecca for fast cars with no speed limits. The whole idea stands my hair on end.

I feel a mixture of thrill and apprehension as we travel Europe without a planned itinerary. Chaos is like the Usually I had finished law school and my Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) job in Montana was almost over. Like this trip with Ian, I didn't plan my next job. As I

left Montana, my brother Tom and I traveled down the Missouri River from Yankton South Dakota through the Saint Louis locks, into the Mississippi, past Labadie to Cairo, Illinois. Grandma Florence was against the whole idea, fearing that one of us could get injured. One company donated a wooden fulbot in my effort to break the journey swimming record. After a few days Tom and I realized we would need more support to challenge a world record, a record which stood a total of 80 years until Martin Strel from Slovenia crushed it by swimming for two months down the Amazon. Our dreams of a world record became quite a summer canoe trip. One day we helped a family stranded in a boat by crossing the channel, fighting floodwaters upstream and bringing them back a gallon of gasoline. Another night we hid in a stone shelter near Indian Cave as a thunderstorm spawned seven tornadoes in Grand Island and ripped through Nebraska. The next morning a Sioux boy caught a catfish with a high powered bow and arrow, a morning meal in a matter of minutes. A barge broke away from its tugboat and stormed like a raging bull for miles before slamming into a bridge support.

At some point Tom returned home and I continued the odyssey alone. One night a thunderstorm caught me by surprise, collapsing my tent free from its muddy stakes. There was no place to run, no place to hide. I squatted in a thick grove of Aspen trees, drenched to the bone. What had been my dry tent was covering parts of my soaked body like a makeshift parka. Lightening cracked nearby. Like the ears of an artillery soldier, I went deaf from dozens of bolts. After the first few they no longer startled me, and I prayed the rosary til the storm passed. Exhausted, I slept til noon in my damp tent parka.

One lazy afternoon I was making little progress down the Mississippi and began to dream about choosing the life of a political martyr like John Kennedy or a humble lawyer like Atticus Finch. I thought of Chuang Tzu fishing the Pu river with his bamboo pole. Two messengers from the Prince arrived to tell him that he was to be prime minister. Holding the pole and watching only the river he said, "Three thousand years ago a sacred tortoise was canonized and wrapped in silk on an precious altar with a cloud of

incense. But which is better? To give up one's life to become a sacred shell for thousands of years? Or to live as a plain turtle, dragging its tail in the mud?"

The two messengers did not hesitate. One answered, "For the turtle it is better to live and drag its tail in the mud." The other nodded in approval.

"Go home!" said Chuang Tzu, "and leave me here to drag my tail in the mud!"

That same afternoon I was nearing Arkansas when I glimpsed a pack of ominous clouds running along the port side. They looked like silly clowns but portended something sinister. Turning my head upstream, I saw a waterspout sucking up the river a mile or two away. Adrenalin coursed through my veins, fight or flight. I chose flight. I jumped into the river, clenching a bow rope in my teeth, and swam ashore. I tied the boat offshore. There was no time to save any gear. Fortune of fortunes, I found myself in the middle of a Girardeau limestone quarry. A short sprint inland and I reached the safety of a massive rock cave. The tornado stayed within the banks until a sharp bend in the river. There the river veered to the right but the tornado cut a straight path into the woods, leaving a trail of death and destruction through seven Illinois counties. As the storm passed the quarry, an incredible sunset emerged. I was thankful beyond words for living to see the unique majesty of that setting sun. I swear I saw the silhouette of the Holy Spirit against its orange sphere. In the quiet aftermath of the storm, I experienced a timeless moment of heightened awareness.

Tom and I brought these and many other stories back with us from the Muddy River. Somewhere in the middle, I called home from a pay phone at a riverside park just to let Mom know her sons were alive and well.

"A colonel called here. He asked to speak to you."

"Really? That's crazy."

"Yesterday. He wants you to call him back as soon as you can."

"Wow. Is he in the Army?"

"I think so. They want you to enlist as a lawyer."

"Yeah, that's what I thought. A Major went to the law school to recruit future lawyers. I forgot his name. I interviewed with him mostly because Dean Murray was

once the JAG commandant. But that had to be, what, two years ago? I didn't hear anything after that."

I told Tom about the phone message. We decided to camp out at the park so I could call the Colonel first in the morning. That night I had plenty of time to think about being a lawyer for Uncle Sam.

About the only person who had served in the Army was Don, my dad. In June 1950 North Korea communists had invaded South Korea. My parents got married that November and, soon thereafter, Don got drafted soon thereafter after the local board found his draft card behind a stack of metal drawers. He was supposed to move out with the 101st Airborne Division. Most of the guys in his company were killed in the front lines. At the last minute he was reassigned to a communications battalion at the Dai-Ichi Building in Tokyo. Don was stationed under the flagpole with the top brass, but at least Mom could sleep at night knowing her husband was 700 miles from the war. Most of the enlisted guys hated the military. To them, "Regular Army" volunteers were "real arseholes."

I called the number. It was a new Recruitment Office in Falls Church, Virginia. Ever since Vietnam, recruiting was down and many of the young men who did volunteer did so to avoid jail. As a result the number of crimes committed by American soldiers was off the charts. The Army Judge Advocate General's Corps was short 150 JAG lawyers and, as a result, it was taking too long to get court-martial to trial. The commands in Germany, where 250,000 soldiers were stationed, had the biggest backlog of cases. No wonder they opened up a new office and tracked down anyone they could find.

Lieutenant Colonel Paul Twohig cut to the chase. "We need a three-year commitment."

"OK." That was no surprise.

"You can be assigned to southern Germany, if you like, near the Alps," he pressed. "A good salary as a box top Captain. Basic officer allowance for off-post housing. You'll try more criminal cases than you can count.

I listened like a dry sponge, trying to picture all of this in my mind. A captain, I thought to myself.

After a few seconds of silence he jumped in. "What do you say?"

What could I say? What would anyone say in my shoes? In Sergeant Pearman's memoir he wrote that he enlisted the first time because he felt like he "should like to travel and see other Countries." I felt the same way. I went from kindergarten to passing the bar, non-stop. After high school, four years of college, and three of law school, I was burned out and longed to travel somewhere, anywhere. "Yes! I mean, of course, sir. When do I report? ... Yes sir, I'll be there."

With few weeks to spare, I cut my river trip short at Cairo, Illinois, not New Orleans. Don drove me down to Fort Leonard Wood to buy my first uniform. He must have been proud of his son the junior officer. Then, I was off to Fort Lee and Charlottesville for ninety days of basic training.

I had been a lackluster student in law school, so I can only imagine the field-grade officers scraping down to the bottom of an old cardboard box to find my interview form. Few in my basic class of fifty men and women had prior military experience, and those who did were all headed to stateside posts. To encourage those with no military background to join, the Army promised us the best slots overseas. Uncle Sam commissioned us as captains, skipping first- and second-lieutenant ranks. Box-top captains, we were as green as the uniforms on our backs. When we walked in our spit-shined dress shoes, we had swaggers in our steps. We were JAG officers, and we knew it.

The basic class was grueling with mock trials and administrative law classes. Getting fifty green recruits ready for deployment was no easy task. Near the end of the course, the Major passed out our orders. Report to the Staff Judge Advocate, Augsburg, Germany, on or before 5 October, 1980. Sure enough, I was headed to Southern Germany near Austria and the Alps—just like they promised.

IAN AND I STEP OFF THE TRAIN. The station, Augsburg Hauptbahnhof, looks just like it did three decades ago, especially the facade. I see my old apartment building in the distance, a tower standing nearly 500 feet (150 meters) above the city landscape. The locals call it Maiskolben, a corncob. From this distance I see the resemblance. The hotel was a four-star hotel built for the

1972 Summer Olympics in Munich. Afterwards they rented the middle floors as apartments. For my three years on active duty, I lived in apartment 2812 facing south. We hail a cab from the station.

When we arrive at what now is the Dorint Hotel, to the right of the entrance is closed because a large piece of concrete had recently fallen to the ground. A Kongresshalle next door has nothing scheduled for today. Inside the building looks clean and modern, stainless steel fixings and wall to ceiling mirrors adorn a well appointed bar behind the reception desk.

“Gruss gott,” a hotel receptionist greets us.

“Gruss gott” I quickly answer. I hadn’t heard or said that in thirty years. It is a shortened form

of Grusse euch Gott, or “may God greet you,” similar to the English goodbye, a contraction of “God be with ye.” It is still the standard greeting in Bavaria, neighboring Austria, and the northern reaches of Italy. In northern Germany, however, an atheist might be irritated and respond in a sarcastic tone with wenn ich ihn sehe, “if I see Him”, or hoffentlich nicht so bald, “hopefully not too soon.”

A couple of floors directly above my old apartment, Ian and I check into a room. The floor plan is exactly how I remember it. Ian is amazed that one entire wall is a window from floor to ceiling. Two sliding glass doors lead to a pair of balconies with half-moon railings where we can watch the sunset. The furnishings are new, the view timeless. Walking to the rail, I am glad my green Polartec keeps me toasty in the slight evening breeze. Two floors below, I can see my old balcony festooned with ivy and flowers. Whoever lives there now must have a green thumb. Just below to the south, a familiar clock tower marks the inevitable passage of time with silent accuracy. Then and now, on time as always.

Gazing down from the balcony, I can see the path I would take from the hotel toward Sheridan Kaserne, one of four American bases in Augsburg. The path looks very much the same. My mind reels. On nicer days, I liked to take the brisk hike to work. I took me twenty minutes. Most of the locals who worked in that section of town walked to work or took bicycles. Many had lived in Augsburg for generations, content to work in one restaurant or business

for their entire careers. For those here and other towns of Bavaria, life was simple, ordered, and predictable. One bridge took us over railroad tracks to the military base and the business district. It seemed that every window was decorated with ivy geraniums, bright with green leaves and red wispy flowers. People were too proud to trash their own neighborhoods with cigarette butts or paper or anything. “Leave only footprints,” a hiker’s T-shirt once said, “take only photographs.” If only I had taken pictures back then. Even in my green Army uniform, I blended well with the stream of Germans shuffling off to work every day. If it ever rained or snowed in the morning I would drive to work in an old Volkswagen bug (pronounced “folkswagen,” meaning “car of common folks.”).

I was excited about my first day on the job. I work my gabardine green uniform with a matching garrison cap pinned with silver railroad bar insignia denoting my rank as a Captain. I flashed my green military ID at the gate and returned the guard’s crisp salute. Building 104, the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, was just inside the gate. Several German nationals went inside the front door with me. They were right on time but wondered, without saying, who I might be. I was whisked to the officer in charge, Captain G. William Hubbard. He was a West Pointer, a superb athlete from Chicago who, I later learned, regularly ran two miles in well under ten minutes.

“Aarons is it?” On his desk I can barely make out his name etched in a wooden plaque that barely floats above a sea of legal files and documents. Every flat space on the desk and other furniture has its own pile of manila folders stuffed with pleadings.

“Yes, sir. Steve Aarons.”

“Well, for starters, you don’t address me as ‘sir.’” He peered over his glasses at me. “We’re both captains, so ‘Bill’ will do. And for another, John ... Have you met John yet?”

“No sir, I mean Bill.”

“Captain John Wallace? Well, he’s the third prosecutor in this JAG office. Neither one of us has had a single day of leave in six months. Now that you’ve arrived, I’m taking the week off and I approved his leave, too”

“But...” I stammered.

“You will find our staff excellent, seasoned German nationals who have worked here for years,” Bill continued. “Just sign whatever they tell you to. Claims. Powers of Attorney. Whatever. Oh, and, Steve is it?”

“Yes.”

“Steve, there is a general court-martial on Wednesday against the infamous defense lawyer Ed

Bellin. It's a rape trial. Interview your victim; get the other witnesses ready. Good luck.”

And with that, he left the room. I was sitting alone in a chair across from his now empty desk.

There I was, in charge of a building with a dozen or so employees in legal assistance, claims, and who knows what. Fortunately there were no briefings scheduled with the base commander. I could only feign ignorance so far. The staff was friendly and fluent in English. As Bill said, they knew what needed to be done. I was just there to sign their documents.

But prosecuting a rape trial? I had handled argument in court for my legal assistance clients in Montana and even a few uncontested divorces during law school. I finished ninety days of basic training at the JAG's School in Charlottesville, Virginia, and they put us through a mock trial. Needless to say, this court-martial was no mock trial. It was real. A real victim. A real soldier being accused. And the trial was two days away.

I found out that Ed Bellin was the senior partner in a West German law firm that represented military defendants in courts-martial. His reputation made this case all the more foreboding. Lawyers associated with the firm included F. Lee Bailey, a lawyer who had represented Sam Sheppard, a case that some insist became the inspiration for the TV show *The Fugitive*. Years later Bailey would represent O.J. Simpson. Another celebrity attorney with the firm, Melvin Belli, had represented everyone from Muhammad Ali to Zsa Zsa Gabor. This is what they mean by sink or swim. To make matters worse, I was sick as a dog and frequenting the latrine.

That afternoon I found the upstairs office where I would be working. I looked at a nice pitched ceiling window, just enough light for a schefflera, or umbrella plant, that I would buy at the PX after duty. I studied the file

for Wednesday's trial including the trial counsel's script. Sergeant Wilson, my trial counsel's assistant, brought in the prosecution witnesses on Tuesday afternoon, the victim last. She was a beautiful German girl of 16 or 17 and, through our translator, Otto Manko, she explained how this soldier who was dating her mother had sexually assaulted her. Her story was quite believable. I told her that the trial would be down the hall on Wednesday, and to arrive early.

The next morning could not have started off worse. The *fräulein* did not appear and, when the *polizei* tracked her down, she had been wandering the streets all night. She looked a mess. Her clothes were damp, her hair tangled. Apparently her mother threw her out because the defendant was still her mother's lover, and they tried everything to dissuade the daughter from testifying.

The military judge, not to mention the nine court members who were assigned to serve as jurors, had waited impatiently for one hour, but at last the government was ready to proceed. My first witness was the young lady. We slowly walked through what happened on the night of the rape and also what had happened the night before the trial. She was weary, but her testimony was clear. In a strange way, what had happened to her the night before helped in my cross-examination of her mother and the accused. The panel found the accused guilty but sentenced him to only a dishonorable discharge with no time in prison. The Staff Judge Advocate at VII Corps Headquarters in Stuttgart, Colonel Carroll Tichenor, called me just after the sentence. He was a Vietnam vet and as stern a senior officer as I would ever care to meet. He phoned {{?}} to find out why the sentence had been so light.

"Frankly, sir," I explained, not a hint of disappointment in my voice, "we were darn lucky to get a conviction out of this case. I was handed the file yesterday and found out the hard way that the victim's mother and the accused are still having an affair."

"But don't the members know that without any imprisonment, this man will be sitting around the base for a month or two until we process his separation papers?" he asked.

"There were two lieutenant-colonels on the panel, sir, with years of experience," I replied. "I can't say what was

discussed in jury deliberations, but my guess is they had trouble convicting given problems with the witness and her mother. We had no real corroboration, just the young girl's word against that of a soldier. I am relieved we pulled out a conviction, to be honest."

Colonel Tichenor said something gruff and hung up.

I should have been afraid of him, afraid of the trial, afraid of everything. I guess I was too sick with the flu to fear anything, too engaged in the demands of each moment. I even felt a measure of pride at the end of the day. Sick as a dog, {and with only two days to prepare (?) } I pulled it together, and won my first trial. I believed my witness, and so did the panel. They didn't sentence the soldier to imprisonment, but frankly that didn't matter much to me. He would leave the military with a felony conviction, marked in a way that might help a detective, prosecutor, or judge in the States should he ever try to assault someone else. In my book, it was a victory.

It was the first of what would be fifty-two criminal cases as a prosecutor, and one of two I remember best. The victim in the other trial was a little black girl named Athena. A stoic toddler, she came to the hospital with abdominal injuries including a section of dead colon. The surgeon who operated on her was convinced her father had beaten her, but her father related a convincing story about how she was playing when a hand-held dumbbell rolled off a table into her stomach. Athena was far too young to talk, let alone testify.

According to the surgeon, the injuries were too close together to be caused by a single blow by the pair of thirty-pound dumbbells. Also suspicious was the fact that the father did nothing after the claimed accident. His wife came home and, seeing Athena listless, rushed her to the hospital for emergency surgery. I remember approaching the panel of officers and enlisted men, holding the weights by my side in my left hand.

In closing argument, my last words were "If this happened to your child, would you have done nothing?"

I paused a chilling second and let go of the weights, which fell onto the oak floor with a dramatic, resounding thud. I said no more and returned to my seat. The verdict was not long in coming.

I can't find the SJA courthouse or the large academy building. I guess everything has been torn down. The Russians tore down the Berlin Wall in the late '80s. When the Cold War ended, the American soldiers left Germany. In Augsburg, the Americans deeded the four Army kasernes, back to the local authorities. The stone buildings would have lasted centuries, but they were unwanted reminders of the Nazi regime that had built them. The community hurriedly razed the structures. Now, modern office buildings obscure the dark memory.

They did leave one building untouched, the humble chapel. The chapel, which once stood at the

end of the parade grounds, is now surrounded by other businesses. It houses a kindergarten. I look inside the front door. The building is empty for summer vacation. The pews have been replaced with children's tables and chairs. Instead of sacred objects on the walls, there are brightly colored children's artworks and a bookshelf full of picture books. The clerestory windows above what had been an ecumenical altar are still there.

I did not attend the chapel often when I was stationed here. Not many soldiers did. One crisp autumn morning, we sat through a tragic funeral, the pews packed with students and soldiers and families I barely knew. A 17-year old boy named Danny had gone with two friends to Oktoberfest in Munich. No doubt they had too much beer to drink. They had taken the westbound train back but missed the Augsburg stop. They got off at Ulm, 85 kilometers (about 50 miles) away, and waited for the next eastbound train back to Augsburg. For reasons only drunk teenagers might fathom, they walked along the tracks at the desolate station. A fast-moving train surprised them. The other two got out of the way, but Danny was killed instantly.

Instead of a casket, his father, a lieutenant colonel in the artillery, placed a pair of his tennis shoes on one side of the altar. It served as a striking symbol of his youth and untimely death. At the end of the mass, tears evaporated during the song "Danny Boy." I look up through those same clerestory windows. Today, the trees are full of leaves but, that day, a gentle wind rustled leafless branches against the glass. Wispy clouds marched above the trees. From this

perspective of song and sorrow and sky, I pictured the soul of Danny touching the face of God.

Danny was about the same age as Ian is now. Ian's scoutmaster, Manny Ortiz, once reminded me that "Emmanuel" means "God is with us." I thank God that my son Ian is safe and sound by my side.

"What?" Ian asks.

I must have been staring at him.

"Nothing." I sigh as my thoughts race to the present.

"I'm just happy you're here with me."

{break}

{Back when I lived in Augsburg}, Otto Manko, my portly interpreter, used to drive me out of town and through the Bavarian countryside every third month. We would spend a full day checking on Americans housed in spotless German jails. Less often, we would observe an American being tried within the German courts. It was our duty and our pleasure. During these trips, he would stop at a nearby gasthaus, or guesthouse, for lunch. We would sit down at the community table. The locals encouraged me to speak German. Despite two world wars, the people here loved Americans. (They even liked some of my jokes, but that may have been the beer.) Otto and the older men all claimed they fought on the Eastern Front against the Russians. I wondered why I never met a single soul who fought on the Western Front. Back in the States, the elders all say they voted for Kennedy when the voting record proves less than half of them really did. During these jaunts, my love of chess was rekindled by a quick game or two. I must admit I lost to the locals far more than I won, but it was all in fun, and I improved each time. Nor could Otto and I drink as many beers as his friends. He and I had to report back at the office by day's end, and I could hardly look disheveled or smell of one too many. On the way back to the office, I could not understand how such a friendly and outgoing culture could have been responsible for all that happened under the Nazi regime. It is something I will never understand.

{break}

I doubt I left a good impression with Colonel Tichenor after my first trial. Good or bad, shortly

thereafter, he had me transferred into a lieutenant colonel slot as command judge advocate of Field Station Augsburg. FSA was an army intelligence and security command asset. It housed a 1,500-foot diameter circular array of antennas nicknamed “the Elephant Cage.” I had to be vetted for top-secret, special intelligence (TSSI) clearance even though, as a junior officer, I had little “need to know” when the British, German, and American linguists were listening in on East German military training.

Typically, a murder of crows would infest the green grass inside the cage. It was a rare day when not a single crow was anywhere to be seen. On those occasions, I looked around for our beloved hunter, a wild hawk who would visit from time to time, perch on the cage, and catch small mammals. The hawk had no interest in eating crow, but the crows were taking no chances.

A worldwide network of antennas including this one in Bavaria could locate high-frequency communications almost anywhere on the planet. On 11 August, 1983, our humble station alone intercepted distress calls from a Soviet submarine sinking in Arctic seas thousands of miles away. A debate rapidly emerged in Washington between those who did not want to compromise our intelligence capabilities and those who thought the Cold War did not trump the lives of the sailors aboard. A clever compromise was quickly forged. The State Department contacted the Russian Embassy with word that a commercial trawler had overheard the distress signal. As protocol during the Cold War, the Soviets did not acknowledge any naval incident and refused assistance. Our efforts went for naught as all hands were lost at sea, but it did matter to those of us who knew something of the tragedy. In spite of the Cold War, we had done the right thing.

After hours, I was the swim coach for forty-eight military brats. My new boss, Colonel Michael

Schneider, encouraged officers to give something back to the community, and my gig was as good as any. The youngest girl on the team was all of eight years old, a tiny stick on the outside with the heart of a lion and an uncanny ability to swim 50 meters in the butterfly event as fast as anyone in the 8-10 year old age group, her arms stroking through the water like twin windmills and her light body

creating little drag on the surface of the water. My oldest swimmers were seventeen and eighteen-year-old high school seniors. Barbara Scanlon, one of the seniors and the older of two German-American sisters, was our best breaststroke swimmer.\

I called the younger ones Marooners; the teenagers were Goldfish. Maroon and gold were the proud colors of the Augsburg Otters, best squad pound for pound in the European theater. Augsburg was a small installation, so we did not have the number of swimmers as the larger teams, but each swimmer improved, and we held our own at swim meets. I appointed “captains” and “lieutenants” for groups of six. Amazingly, this approach kept good discipline from within. I don't remember having to yell at one of my athletes despite the grind of daily workouts and weekly swim meets.

One particularly bad day was when Brigadier General Hammond's son cracked his head against

the side of the pool. He was daydreaming while doing a dozen laps of backstroke and forgot to flip around. Head wounds bleed profusely and look far worse than they are. The only parent at practice, Brad Garth, acted calm so the children would not freak out. Brad drove young Hammond to the emergency room while I kept an eye on the rest of our team. I dreaded getting a call from the General's staff but his son, a few stitches to the wiser, was as good as new the next day. I never got that call.

Our favorite meet was the annual four-day trip to Berlin. It was time off work, time off school, and time to remember. Before boarding the train to Frankfurt and Berlin, I told the team my

three rules: Safety first, stay with your buddy, and have fun. They were never short on fun. It took an entire night to get through East Germany to the military base in Berlin. Berlin families with a swimmer would take one of ours of the same age. The parents who helped me were given Spartan quarters on the base. The meet was held at a grand indoor pool on Andrews Barracks built for the 1936 Summer Olympics but not finished until two years later. The water temperature was colder than our practice pool. Maybe that is why my swimmers always managed to hit

their best time of the season in at least one event. Win or lose, Berlin was a success.

{break}

A lot of JAG officers, unmarried and with a little salary to burn, would buy new Corvettes at the local Post Exchange (PX) or used Porsches on the economy. Until the last six months of my tour, I was content threading a needle with my 1972 VW bug. At last Mr. Scanlon helped me buy a Jeep CJ-7 chrome monster at the PX. In the span of two hours, I learned that even four-wheel drive, off-road vehicles aren't foolproof. I drove deep into a forest on a dirt road and did not notice some surface water. The jeep bogged down in mud up to the rear axle. I was stuck.

I hiked the forest road until I came upon a house with the name BAUMANN on the mailbox. I

knocked, and an older man answered the door. I think he said his name was Heinz. He was fluent in English and agreed to help me. Just inside the front door on a hook hung his boiled wool Tyrolean jacket, a loden green fabric unmatched in warmth before the advent of Polartec and other synthetics. Heinz grabbed it and hopped onto a big Mercedes-Benz tractor parked just outside his simple home. I jogged alongside to show him where my Jeep was stuck but I fell behind. He seemed to know where and drove ahead. By the time I caught up, he had already hooked a chain to the undercarriage. In minutes, he extracted my muddy Jeep from the bog.

Heinz turned off his motor and started to explain from his seat how lucky he had been during

World War II. Not long after D-Day, he and several others from his unit were overrun by the Allies and surrendered without firing a shot. They walked along one side of the road, single file, prisoners marching toward the rear. They watched an endless invasion of tanks and troop trucks and wheeled artillery drive by, all heading east. He said he thought then how foolish for any country to wage war against the world. They were eventually transported to Camp Stark, a prisoner of war camp in New Hampshire. The Germans were treated well there and worked hard cutting logs in the forest. There was plenty of good food, and many prisoners returned to New England after the war.

"But you never returned?" I interrupted, curious as to what he might say. He was, after all, the first German I'd met who admitted to fighting on the Western front.

Emphatically he shook his head "no." He reminded me of my uncle Al Holzum when he would gesture with his head and his hands more than his voice or his words.

"Why not?" I pressed.

"Snow!" Heinz paused. "Too much damn snow." Another pause. "In '44 the snow stood two meters high," as he held his outstretched hand over my five-foot, ten-inch frame. "That's not counting drifts." His eyes stared off in the distance to recall that rugged winter. "All day we dug a walkway from the barracks to the mess hall. The next morning the walkway was half full again." He looked at me and, with a strong voice, said, "I don't blame Americans for your snow. I blame America!"

He looked serious, but I noticed a twinkle in his eye. He blamed America for our snow? The corner of his lip turned. It was a joke, a wry bit of humor for his new American friend. We both laughed, his laugh even louder than mine. We connected. This sturdy old soldier had returned to Bavaria to spend his days tending a forest preserve. You might think a German prisoner had little in common with an American lawyer several generations removed but, on a very human level, we understood one another.

My Jeep started right up, but I jumped out, ran back to the tractor, and reached my hand up to

where Heinz was sitting. His leathery hand grabbed mine, and I squeezed as hard as I could.

"Auf Wiedersehen Herr Baumann," a good-bye that truly meant "until again we meet."

"Auf Wiedersehen." The gears clanged a little as Heinz steered his diesel tractor away.

IAN AND I head south of Augsburg toward the Alps and "mad" King Ludwig's Neuschwanstein Castle. The Romanesque palace is perched on a rugged hill above the village of Hohenschwangauback. Young Ludwig drained the Austrian treasury building it. He slept there only 11 days before he was arrested and placed in the custody of his psychiatrist. Both died under mysterious circumstances in the shallows of a nearby lake.

As expensive as the castle had been to build, more than sixty million tourists have paid to visit it since, some 6,000 each summer day.

The autobahn towards Austria and the Alps is not nearly as exciting as Ian imagined. We exit toward the castle and drive through several mountain villages along the narrow asphalt road. Window boxes overflowing with orange-red geraniums festoon every building. Once we arrive at the castle, we wait in line for one hour just to buy tickets and another hour for our assigned bus from the parking area up to the castle.

A German man fluent in English was standing in line just ahead of us. His Luftwaffe unit had been stationed in Arizona in the early 1980s, the same time I was stationed in Germany with the VII Corps. He and I chat to pass the time, his wife and Ian standing silently beside us. The interior of the castle is as beautiful as I remembered, but the commercialism taints my experience. Drove of tourists are quickly rushed through selected rooms like lemmings. Our tour ends well past sunset, an hour after the last bus. Our group of tourists, about twenty including Ian and me, walk a mile down a steep pathway to, a tiny village beneath the castle where our cars are parked. Some knew to bring rain gear but the rest of us are drenched to the bone. In many ways this walk is the emotional low-point of our trip. Ian yells at me for all of my shortcomings as a father, and I yell back. He gets like this when his blood sugar is low. I am feeling depressed, too. He is upset because his dream of driving a sports car on the autobahn is no longer possible. His dream of driving without speed limits was a nightmare for me, something that sent shivers down my spine. He is very angry at me for not getting his way. He feels unhappy about the trip. The whole trip seems foolhardy to me now, the notion of spending time with a son who has wanted little to do with me for several years. The rain pelts my windswept face like so many teardrops. The dark clouds, the sheet of rain, my emotions, and the cadence of my steps down the hewn stones, all resonate like twelve bars of blues chords. Sad notes for a sad day.

An old wound festers as I think about how I spent my childhood chasing after my father's affection and now, as a father, I find myself doing it again. I am chasing in vain

after Ian. Like his grandfather, Ian is independent and aloof and dandy. I feel alone even in the company of Ian and other tourists.

We finally reach our rental car. I collapse into the driver's seat, physically and emotionally drained. My left foot is swollen. Night has fallen. At least the car is dry and warm as we silently return to Augsburg. I remember coming home after work to my apartment 2812 the day I learned John Lennon was shot, collapsing in bed and playing "Watching the Wheels" over and over on my high-priced stereo. I was no longer trying to make sense of a senseless world. The loneliness, the hatred, the paranoia. "No longer riding on the merry-go-round," went his song, "I just had to let it go."

Ian and I return to Augsburg. We can't seem to catch a break. It's Sunday night, nearly ten. Every restaurant is closed, and we are both starved and weary. Somehow Trattoria del Garda, our favorite restaurant, is still open, the owner just inside the front door, one cook hidden in the kitchen, the place empty except for two Germans sitting at a dark corner table. It is just a block or two from our place. As we sit down, I whisper what my mom might say, "Thanks be to God."

In 1980 the owner moved here from his birthplace in Tyrol, Italy. He has run this little restaurant ever since. We ate here the first night in Augsburg and loved it. He cannot speak English, and tonight my iPhone is slow translating his Italian, but we make do with smiles and gestures and pointing with our finger at the menu. He brings out fresh bread, a bottle of dry house wine, and olive oil to begin the meal. Ian and I are both content after a miserable day. I relish the texture of the food, the taste of each morsel, the nose of the wine and its dry palate. The owner serves us like a humble butler, lurking somewhere in the background but ready to supply our every need. I sigh at the simple perfection of this place.

A tiny tear falls down my face. Ian didn't notice but his warm smile confirms. He is happy, too.

NOTES: I dream week goes the building with cars parked on the second floor porch including a Volkswagen. And a bedroom downstairs. Decades of soldiers have come and gone.

The clock

Another dream which awakens me. I write quickly to capture as much of its beauty as I possibly can. Even a few words help me remember it's essence or else all will be lost. Ian and I have travelled to Augsburg. I take a taxi to Barracks and

Back to dream. Before I visit. Taxi to Sheridan. Closed but a few buildings preserved as a simple walk through museum Several former soldiers like me are walking through remembering their three years stationed there. An painting of something written on a chalkboard on one wall by an artist named Sorenson a wise saying but I can't remember. Gray hazy skies sunny by standards but colors are much duller than the vivid palette of Santa Fe. Worried about being away from Ian too long he may get scared but when I rerun he is content to hear of my little excursion. Insert night before I walk to see area razed. Ian is older and more resilient than I had imagined. Our dreams are a bit behind our children's emotional growth.

Back to Sheridan. See the plaque. WWII hero. Library or dining hall where Sorenson painting. The simplicity of the paintings with chief strength a photographic like exactness to the perspective. Dark stained masculine wood. A handful of books on a shelf including a brown manual for courts martial. Nixon name inside. No sense of history when I lived there. Simplicity another word lacking in pretense of young men who lived there and what we put on Spartan walls. Working class Americans blue collar. The middle and upper classes turned their noses at military service. Romney trump 4 student deferments in60s same class structure in post nam army. Enlist jail.

CHAPTER FIVE: A CROSSROAD IN AUSTRIA

I must have dozed off and the train jostled me awake. We have stopped somewhere in Austria, still bound for Northern Italy. Ian sleeps soundly just about everywhere and tonight is no exception. Most of our electronic gadgets

are fully charged so I return them into my backpack underneath the bottom bunk just as my cellphone vibrates.

I glance at my iPhone. My mom left a voice message for me sometime after Munich where we lost cellphone service. I have several bars on my cellphone at this train stop but I don't want to wake up Ian or those asleep in the next room. I think about sending mom a text message, and figure out what time it is in Saint Louis. She is almost 90, healthy and active. My parents met in the usual way. It was 1950 and dad had just landed a job in a downtown Saint Louis office. Mom had been working there for some time as an executive assistant. The economy was robust after the Second World War and this company was doing well. One Friday dad volunteered to come in on Saturday to help mom finish a report due first thing Monday morning. They finished the project around noon on Saturday and he drove her to a café for lunch. They wound up talking for several hours. Mom had to pick up her dress from a seamstress. Little did they know they would spend over a quarter century as husband and wife.

MY MEMORIES OF THE ALPS are of ski trips there. The Augsburg Officers' Club organized outings every month and they rented a bus for winter ski trips to the Zugspitze, the highest mountain on the border between Germany and Austria. I bragged at the outset of one trip over the Thanksgiving weekend that, after a close call in college, I had never been drunk in all my 27 years. Behind my back a ne'er do well friend must have forged an evil conspiracy. The drive was long and I felt sleepy after dinner. One of the waitresses poured two shots for the birthday guest. My birthday had been earlier that week but that didn't matter. Schnapps is a strong drink that means "swallow" in German. I had to swallow my shot in one gulp. The Fräulein slammed her shot glass onto the table before mine and, I was told, it would be an international insult if I refused a second chug after losing the first. Despite my best effort, she won as easily the second time as the first. Before long I lost count. I raised my hand to stop, slurred a feeble answer to the shouts of diplomatic scandal, and turned around. With each unsteady step I could hear the roar of friends and merry strangers. I stumbled upstairs and

managed to collapse on top of my bed, fully clothed. One brag ruined 27 years of sobriety.

My good eye opened. It was morning. My skull throbbed. I skipped breakfast just to be safe. No one would admit it but I could easily imagine someone paying the most innocent looking waitress to knock me out. But who?

The others got off our bus for a Saturday of alpine skiing. Our driver kept the heater on and the diesel engine idling in the parking lot. I slept for hours stretched out on the rear seat. One of the other drivers told ours that the slopes were closed due to severe winds. The Americans and many other tourists were stranded for most of the day in a crowded restaurant halfway up the mountain. As night fell it was safe to herd the disgruntled skiers back down the lifts and into the buses. On the way back to the hotel, I heard sad tales of lousy food and stinky bathrooms, a just reward for their conspiracy.

In a second story office overlooking these mystic Alps, Carl Jung wrote his Answer to Job, but he did more than write for his kind readers; he grieved for them. The book came into being during the fever of illness, as if the holy spirit seized the scruff of Jung's neck, words gushing from of his soul, ink filling each page in measured cadence like notes from a composition by Mozart. Joy did not arise from completion of a perfect work, but sorrow, and not just the personal sorrow of Jung but that of Jesus, whom Isaiah saw as "a man of sorrow, acquainted with grief." Jung reminds us of that "Jesus wept" at the death of his friend Lazarus, deeply moved like David at the death of his friend Jonathan. If anyone might look beyond the death of Lazarus, if anyone should be excused for standing aloof from the wails surrounding him, it would have been Jesus, the man God who soon raised Lazarus from the dead. Yet Jesus became man to experience our profound sense of mortality not only at the death of his friend but at his own crucifixion.

It was the same sense of mortality that spurred Yung to write his book: "In *confinio mortis* [the edge of death] and in the evening of a long and eventful life a man will often see immense vistas of time stretching out before him. Such a man no longer lives in the everyday world and in the vicissitudes of personal relationships, but in the sight of

many aeons and in the movement of ideas as they pass from century to century.”ⁱ

A SECOND MEMORY OF AUSTRIA reminds me how short my time is, how death lurks in every shadow. In Montana I had mastered the art of cross-country skiing but, on the trips to Austria, everyone else chose downhill skiing. By day I embraced my loner's role, avoiding lifts filled with tourists who were headed up the mountain. Instead I set off the other direction on forest roads through wooded foothills. The snow was packed down by a handful of Germans and Austrians and Italians, locals who shared my love of paths less traveled. The roads were well marked and connect to quaint towns up the Montafon valley. Maps showed a mountain stream meandering down the center of the valley but the winter snows left little evidence of any stream. Against the sky soared jagged Alps. They had brilliant white glaciers, barren and majestic beyond belief. I would puff all morning up one side of the valley to the next town, grab a warm lunch, and glide down the other side of the valley to our hotel. I could shower and change before the bus load of tired Americans would return for dinner.

Late one Sunday afternoon I thoughtlessly veered off my return leg. On the way back the main trail should have been level, or slightly downhill, but after some distance I noticed the path began to cut up the foothill and into the wilderness. This was wrong. I should have retraced my tracks back to the crossroads, but the sun was setting. I worried about catching our bus at 5:30 when it was scheduled to leave for Augsburg. So I turned my skis sharply downhill, a steep shortcut off the packed snow toward the main trail. Almost immediately, I fell into soft snow as my skis yanked off my feet.

Suddenly I saw nothing. My face was planted in snow. The stillness was disturbing. Layers of clothing had stopped rubbing with each stride. Instead of a melodic rhythm of inhaling and exhaling, I was holding my breath. Blood rushed to my head and my eardrums pounded out my nervous pulse. In the silence I could hear a stream of frigid air teasing the highest evergreen treetops.

Mindfulness replaced bewilderment and shock. Hemingway describes a corpse he found in these very hills

after an avalanche, but I thought little of God and nothing of Hemingway. This was no avalanche. I was no corpse. I quickly freed my hands from the poles and struggled until my feet were below my waist. In the struggle I sank a little deeper into the white abyss.

I was alone.

Missing the bus was the least of my problems. Given the late hour, no one would wander up the side trail and no one could see or hear me from the main trail. A rescue party would set out, but not before morning.

I decided to dig a shelter in the snow and pray my layers of clothes would keep me alive until dawn in the high Alps. I thought about tying something to a ski and planting it upright for others to see if I were asleep or unconscious. I reached for one ski and then the other. Necessity being the mother of invention, an idea came to me. I lifted both skis above the snow and twisted them into a cross. I grabbed the center of the cross with both hands and pulled with all my might. The skis bore my weight as I somehow lifted myself on top of the snow. The long surface area of both skis kept me from sinking back into a quicksand of cold powder. One ski length after another, I carefully crawled back to the trail. A wretched sailor tossed ashore, I kissed the hard packed snow beneath me. A single tear ran down my cheek. I stood up, shook off most of the snow and stepped into my skis. One pole was lost but I dared not look back. I shivered as I pumped hard to the crossroads. I shivered even after working up a sweat. Fueled by sheer adrenaline, I raced to the bus with time to spare.

Saying nothing, I sat by a window near the back of the bus for the long drive home. It wasn't my time. I thought about how good men die young and, for me, it wasn't about being good or bad but about God expecting me to accomplish many more tasks before I could leave this earth. I had no idea what tasks those might be, but rest assured He expected more of me than an early death.

I did not always fear death. I was born in Saint Louis, Missouri, and only three when we moved to Chicago. President John Kennedy was visiting Chicago and his motorcade was scheduled to pass behind our house in Park Forest from the airport. Mom collected two "Nixon" campaign signs from the Republican headquarters, cut one

up, and taped “Nix” on the left window, “on” on the center window, and “Nixon” on the right of the three upstairs windows. We could not see inside the motorcade cars but it was not hard to imagine Kennedy chuckling at the play on words. More people claimed to have voted for Kennedy than did, but mom had the cut up cardboard to prove it.

I was almost nine when Lee Oswald shot John Kennedy. They canceled my birthday party the next day. Day and night my youngest brother Tom and I watched the television screen from the floor of our family room, our legs underneath the couch. The world, mourning the senseless death of a great man, would never seem safe again. Tragedy united us. His stirring speeches were replayed on the television and radio, his words more poignant in death. In life he asked us what we could do for our country. Hearing his call to service, I decided under the couch to become a martyr statesman like he had been. I imagined my simple childhood in Park Forest and Elk Grove Village being studied after I gave my life in service to others. I was not afraid to die doing “all the good I can, at all the times I can, to all the people I can, as long as I ever can.” With hindsight these thoughts seem like delusions of grandeur, but never underestimate the ability of a child to imitate a great man to accomplish good in his life. This martyrdom captured my attention for much of my young life until it eventually gave way to another heroic model.

My youth was not only about such lofty goals. One time I went to work with dad on the “El,” the commuter train. The train was “elevated” until it went underground in downtown Chicago. Leaving the subway for his greeting card warehouse, I looked up at the skyscrapers and fell to the ground. To me the perspective made the buildings appear poised to topple down. After a few times I controlled the phobia by not staring at the ground and reasoning that the tall buildings were in no danger of falling.

I loved my second grade nun, a young woman with a perfect face who taught me handwriting. One day she came to class wearing over-sized sunglasses. “Big daddy” came out of my mouth and she slapped me in the face. I’m not sure why I said that, but maybe I got the expression from a beach movie where the cool beatnik wore dark glasses. I

doubt Sister knew what I meant either, but she considered it disrespectful. I felt horrible, not from the slap but from saying something so terribly wrong about someone I admired so much. She never mentioned this indiscretion at the parent teacher conference, only telling my parents that I had college potential.

As for potential, you can learn a lot about a person by the friends he keeps. There was a six month stretch where I got into a lot of trouble with Mike, a student in my class who lived alone with his mother. For no particular reason we ran away from home one night until my dad grabbed me by the ear at the neighborhood bowling alley; I ditched a pack of Parliament cigarettes from my pocket onto the parking lot asphalt before Mike and I got inside the backseat of the car. We walked out of another store several times with metal Tonka® toys in each hand, broke into a restaurant and ate our fill of coconut shavings from a large barrel in the storage room. We had not been caught until we started a small bonfire with paper scraps in an empty field well behind the grocery store. It was a fairly benign thing for kids to do but a store manager saw this and freaked. The previous week, on the day Marilyn Monroe died, there had been a grease fire in the restaurant. Having seen enough fire engines and hoses, the manager called the police. An officer drove us both home, marking the end of our brief criminal partnership.

AS AN ADULT I would wait up for my teenager to come home, broken curfew and all. Later Ian told me he had been experimenting all that time with drugs but I hadn't noticed much at the time. I knew he smoked marijuana but shudder to think of him trying Ecstasy and other hard drugs. He had a couple of minor brushes with the law, nothing alarming. One time he and his friends were going to smoke in the national forest when a park ranger detained them until their mothers came. Another time he was driving home from a party, got pulled over for speeding, and the officer saw an empty bottle of booze in the back floorboard. Ian tested zero for alcohol, but he was assigned to Teen Court for his mistake. I did not feel Ian needed more consequences but I did expect for him to take better care of our two older dogs.

Uncle Clyde once drove from Saint Louis to Chicago with a surprise present for me, a collie named Sandy. I loved my new puppy but she could hardly have arrived at a more stressful time. The doctors had just confirmed my parents' worst fear. My middle brother, Kenny, was mentally retarded due to complications. Unlike Downs syndrome children, Kenny looked like any other kid but his brain was damaged from lack of oxygen during birth. I feel some shame remembering how embarrassed I felt at restaurants and public places with Kenny. People looked at Kenny and saw he was somehow different. That meant people would see our family as different, me as different. I could hardly fit in with a retarded brother. As an adult I grew to appreciate how the developmentally disabled express their love without concern for the social conventions that mask the behavior of other adults. Their simple approach to the joys and sorrows that life brings may be superior in many ways to the guarded and nuanced view "normal" people have towards life. But as a child I lacked little insight into Kenny's situation. I just felt embarrassed by him. People looked down on Kenny and me by his side. I feared that when people looked at Kenny in public they would see my insecurities too. As Kenny's mom, Mom's life course would be defined by his life-long condition. She became a political advocate for the needs of the developmentally disabled in legislative action committees. Later in life Mom became a watchdog over Kenny's housing situation, making sure his needs were met in group and companion homes.

THE TRAIN LURCHES FORWARD. I should have known it was a very short stop in the middle of the night. The bars on my phone disappear and "no service" pops up again. I got sidetracked by childhood memories, too long to listen to my mom's message or type a reply text to her. Mom will have to wait until the next time we get cell phone service.

I spent a lot of time away from our house in Elk Grove, as little time at home as possible. One Saturday a school mate I went to the school playground and climbed on top of the monkey bars. We walked from one end to the other, counting each lap out loud. I remember reaching "110" when, for no particular reason, I started to day dream

about an episode of Combat with Vic Morrow. I exhaled, closed my eyes, sailed off of the bars and hit the sand. I must have passed out before I saw my friend's face staring down at me. He helped me find my way home. I complained all night of a busting headache. I remember a pleasant dream walking out of my room, especially the part where I noticed a luminescent angel suspended at the foot of my parents' bed. I turned away and floating down a flight of illuminated stairs to the lower floor. Traveling suspended in the air was a little scary for me, like when a roller coaster suddenly breaks downward and you feel out of control.

This light dream was soon replaced by a darker nightmare that would visit me every time I fell asleep. Each time it was the same. I would fight to stay conscious as long as possible. After several weeks my mom became worried over my lack of sleep and lost appetite. My parents drove me to a child psychologist to see if anything was wrong. My mom thought it might be from that concussion.

The gentle psychologist smiled and escorted me into his office. My parents sat in the waiting room. He had a sandbox in one corner of his office where I dutifully played with a toy dump truck. He must see younger children, I thought. As a ten year old, I was too old to play with dump trucks and sandboxes. He asked me questions about my nightmare. He asked about school and friends. Then he walked outside his room to talk to my parents. "It's not a concussion," I think I heard him say, but I could not make out the rest of their conversation. He brought mom and dad back into his office where I was still sitting by the sandbox.

"Steve, I have a secret to tell you. It should help you with your nightmare." I listened intently. "When your nightmare begins, be brave and repeat to yourself 'it's only a dream.' If you say this out loud, you will know your dream isn't real. As soon as you know it's a dream, it shouldn't frighten you any more."

I worried as bedtime approached. The doctor seemed so sure this would work. My dad bought a brass rod that twisted against the floor and ceiling in the corner of my bedroom. Three cone shaped swivel lights were attached to the rod. He screwed in a soft light in the top cone, maybe 20 watts, pointed it toward the ceiling away from my bed.

Mom walked in. “I’ll leave this light on.” She kissed my forehead. “Good night” she whispered as she shut my bedroom door behind her.

I said nothing as a surge of anxiety pounded in my heart. I stared at the intersection of the two walls and the ceiling where the light cast different shadows. As I fell asleep, the dream began. Once again I was alone inside a small car. Each detail was as vivid to me as to the man in the movie *Groundhog Day* who would awaken to the same morning day after day. As always, I looked out the front passenger window. As I looked out that window, I could see my car flying over a cattle guard, soaring over a dry river bed. Suddenly the car crashed into sand and the roof caved in. I struggled to get out as I felt being grabbed from behind. I was trapped and helpless inside the wreckage. Death was behind me. Adrenaline would surge through my veins as I braced against this dark unknown. My legs could not move. Each night I would sit up in my bed, sweat covering my forehead and the back of my neck. Sometimes I would scream. On this night, however, I did not sit up. I did not scream. Ready to face my nightmare once and for all, I told myself “This is only a dream. Only a dream, only a dream...”

CHAPTER SIX: THE FASHION OF MILAN

A RUDE JOLT reawakens me as stretched out train cars collapse a little against one another, brakes gently screeching to a predestined stop.

“What’s that?” A disembodied voice from above. A light brown blanket reveals an arm and a grey long sleeved night shirt.

Reality, or what I accept as real, floods my consciousness. The voice and arm belong to Ian, of course. I recall last he was sound asleep in the bunk. The familiar creaks and cracks of the train in high speed motion had lulled me into a deep sleep but now silence startles both of us. The train has stopped.

“Are we there yet?” Ian insists, a question asked of fathers since the dawn of childhood. His bunk is too high above the window to look out.

I wipe a little condensation with my palm from our window and gaze outside, expecting to see a train station.

Instead an early morning mist reveals our train has stopped just outside the Milan station.

“Almost” I say, wondering if we stopped so people could use the washrooms before reaching the station or if our train is waiting for another to leave our assigned gate. I take advantage of the wash room just down the hall, a spotless room with a stainless steel sink, a toilet and a tiny shower cubicle. I am a little surprised that no one else is waiting for the washroom. A juror once told me after a midnight deliberation how she could tell the over-40 year old from the under-40 jurors. During each break, the younger jurors would scamper to the vending machines to buy a can of soda or something sweet to eat. The older jurors would trot to the washrooms to relieve themselves from hours of discomfort. Bladders lose patience with age.

I return up the aisle. The conductor was knocking on each door, one by one, making an announcement in the language of its occupants. I overheard German, French, Italian and English. Our sleeping car required many European languages.

“End of the line” he tells me in English as I slip past him into my room. Like a mother duck keeping an eye on every duckling, the conductor knows without thought the nationality of each occupant in his stretch of the train.

“Yes,” I reply. “You speak many languages.”

“Thank you. It is my job.” A hint of pride peeks through his professional demeanor.

I am astonished. Ian is sitting at the foot of my bed and the whole compartment is completely different. When I left minutes ago he was hidden in covers on the top bunk. Now the bedding is piled on the bottom bunk. The top bunk is folded back into the wall. The conductor, like a graceful matador, grabs the bedding and sheets and returns the bottom bunk into the long couch.

“That was fast,” I exclaim, disoriented by the sudden transformation. The conductor nods, closing the door behind him.

“What got into you?” I ask my still half-awake son.

“You know what they say,” he replies, the sure prelude to a bad joke. “When in Rome’...”

“You stole my joke, Ian. And this is Milan. We won’t make Rome ‘til tonight.”

“Augsburg, Milan, Rome. These cities seem like one big blur.”

We order breakfast at the station cafe. The waiter brings me a hot coffee and a glass with ice cubes. The ice cubes cool my coffee so it won't scald my tongue. I open my notebook and scan over the text I typed last night in the sleeper car. I was working on the Austria chapter in *Via* and, just before dozing off, I typed “this is only a dream.” It sounds silly this morning, a little like Dorothy in *Wizard of Oz* when she taps her red shoes together three times and repeats “there's no place like home.” But I can't delete my last sentence or change it somehow. Those words, exactly those words, helped me conquer the recurring nightmare. It stopped completely except for one final sequel, the story of another chapter.

“You're a thousand miles away.” Ian notes. “What's for today?”

I look up. The tables have turned. How many times did I think or say the same thing when Ian's attention was off somewhere texting about his young life unconnected to parents and older people? Life certainly has its own cycles.

“More like fifty years behind. But,” swiveling my notebook in Ian's direction, “look at this.” He glances at a screen filled with text. “I finally started writing my memoir last night.” He nods in approval, a stoic calm that reminds me to answer his question. “Today?” I ask out loud. “Yes. Well, it's a holiday. But if we take a taxi downtown some shops are bound to be open.”

Ian seems content with my scrambled answer. The food must be good; neither of us utters a word. He was really looking forward to Milan because fine Italian clothes are made here. This whole clothes scene is definitely Ian, not me. Milan is another city I did not visit when I was in the Army. Grandpa Lou's family came from Milan, wealthy merchants who came to America around 1900 and owned a city block in Saint Louis Hills, the south side Italian immigrant section of town. In that block they owned a community bank, a hotel, a Laundromat and a silent movie house. The Great Depression of the 1930s took it all, a great equalizer of the not-too-rich and the very poor.

Most of the shops in Milan are closed for the Feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Roman

Catholicism in general, and catholic holidays in particular, still dominate the calendar in Bavaria, Austria and Italy. I experience sticker shock through the windows of closed stores, although we do find a nice jacket for Ian. It was expensive but elegant. This is Ian's trip too, I tell myself. I'd rather buy him a jacket he can wear than rent a sports car any day. Jackets are safer.

Each September my mom used to buy new clothes for Tom and me before the first day of school. We moved so often, so I was the newest kid in my class and with a desperate need to make a good impression. New clothes and shiny school supplies would help. I cared too much what others thought of me. On the first day of sixth grade at Thomas Junior High, I sat to the far left in brand new clothes as Mrs. Divorek paced the waxed checkerboard floor reciting her rules of the road. I did not dare look at her in the face, listening instead to her strict voice and watching her polished shoes march between rows of students. First impressions are often misleading as I soon found myself excelling in her class. In fifth grade I had been the class ventriloquist, the class clown who startled our rookie teacher because she could not figure out who student was projecting his voice onto the print of George Washington on the wall. I goofed off from boredom, and negative attention was better than none. Under the watchful hand of a seasoned teacher in sixth grade, I discovered how positive attention was best of all. I transformed overnight into a serious student whose achievements shot up the bulletin board on the back wall.

Mrs. Divorek covered the back black board with construction paper and drew one column for each student. Whenever a student completed an assigned project, she colored the square on his column across from that task with a dark green marker. My column shot up like a skyscraper to the top of the class. For one green square I drew the folded slip for *Vanity's Fair*, an awful girl's novel, but nothing would deny me my green square. Peter, a classmate, drew the slip to read *War and Peace*, a boyish subject but 1,500 pages long. For another project, I memorized 70 prepositions. Peter drew applause for reciting the same list because he had recorded them on a cassette tape and played the tape over and over while he

slept. Whether by osmosis or the old-fashioned way, we both earned green squares

Climbing up the column, the tasks seemed harder. One assignment was a short speech to the class about the life of a famous person. We were studying the ancient Greeks and I had just read about a beloved general, Themistocles, in Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*. Plutarch's book was flowery and helped a little but World Book Encyclopedia had a colorful map and concrete sentences explaining how this General rose from the lower classes to command the Greek military against Xerxes and the Persians. Between these two books I learned how Themistocles had lured the swifter Persian boats into the straits of Artemisium where fewer but heavier Greek ships prevailed. Despite winning this battle and the war, the jealous Greeks eventually deported Themistocles from their lands. He fled to Persia where he died in exile.

I explained where the General was born and where he died. Using a large map of Greece hanging on one side of the classroom, I showed where battles began as well as the straits that turned the war against the Persians. My canned speech was the right length and I was glad to finish it without any problems. The students that went before me had not received any questions after their speeches and, not expecting any, I was glad to walk back to my seat.

"Where did the Persians come from?" asked one boy.

"How did narrow waters help the Greek ships?" asked another.

"Where are the straits of Artemis?" came a girl's voice.

"The straits of Artemisium are right here" I answered, pointing at the map and spelling the word out on the blackboard. Unrehearsed questions and snappy answers sparked more interest. When at last there were no more questions, I sat down, my cheeks flush from excitement.

That was fun!

In an unexpected way, the next assignment dovetailed with the last speaking assignment. I was to write a short paragraph about one or more careers that might interest me. The school library had a whole shelf of books about this very subject. The first book I checked out was about becoming a doctor. That night after dinner I read a few pages before I remembered how sick I felt after cracking

my front tooth on the linoleum floor. A seasick sailor could hardly treat a wound and I could hardly be a doctor with no stomach for needles, blood, or dealing with someone's pain. I returned the book the next morning.

The second book pointed me in a direction I have followed ever since. The second book sowed a seed that still grows to this day. In *So you want to be a Lawyer*, attorney William Nourse explained how lawyers research in the library and speak in public. I could hardly forget how much I enjoyed reading about the Greek wars and speaking about them in class. Nourse also described the controversy and confusion as a murder trial unfolded:

Suddenly, a hush falls on the courtroom. A man has risen from his table and is walking slowly toward the jury box. Everyone is silent; all eyes are upon this man as he begins to speak. He is the star performer in the drama about to be enacted. As he begins his opening address to the jury, all attention is focused on ... the attorney for the accused.

No longer a skinny middle school boy, I pictured myself standing in patent leather shoes, answering questions not about dead generals of long ago but slipping those who might listen into the shoes of the accused on the night in question. It was not exactly Kennedy's dream of selfless service to our country. It was certainly not about martyrdom. But it was a good dream about helping others one by one.

Grandpa Lou was less and less able to run the business and dad spent more and more time in Saint Louis to save it. Over long summer months he brought mom and their three boys to stay with Aunt Virginia and Uncle Al in Saint Louis County. Al, a master carpenter, had built the large brick home himself and they had rooms to spare. I loved those hot lazy summers in Saint Louis when time stood still. Back in Chicago I used to lay down on the carpet in the living room next to the big console and listen to Harry Carey and Jack Buck describe Cardinals baseball on KMOX radio; three hundred miles from the AM tower, some words were lost over constant static and occasional pops from distant thunderstorms. In West County we were only miles from the games and the reception was near perfect.

So many neighbor kids played sandlot baseball in their huge corner lot. You would never guess that Al and Aunt Virginia, or Gin as everyone called her, could not have children of their own. One day a door-to-door encyclopedia salesman brought out his collection of books for children while a dozen of us were out back choosing sides for one more game. I ran inside to get Gin. The man was facing away from me at the kitchen table. All I could see was his shiny bald head. Gin was collecting a batch of Al's home grown tomatoes, sun ripened from the window sill and ready to slice for salads, pile on hamburgers and cook with mustaccioli sauce.

"But I don't have any children," Gin said matter of fact as several of us surrounded the two of them.

The salesman stood up and, without saying another word, gathered his books back into a thick briefcase, snapped both locks shut, and walked away. Gin tried to explain that all these children did not belong to her but he just pushed past several kids on the porch and he would hear nothing of it.

"Well," I said, turning back at Gin with a hint of impatience, "is it yes or no?"

"Yes or no what?" Gin teased, watching the salesman cross the street to the next house.

"You know."

Even with dishes to clean and laundry to fold, she could hardly say no to her favorite nephew or their favorite pastime. Gin was a lefty and, though you might not think a woman in her mid-forties could play hard ball with young boys, she could. She wasn't shy about the bunions on both of her feet but she stood six foot tall and could drive the ball as well as the older teenagers. During WWII Al had served in North Africa and, after the war, he met Gin while she was an all-star first baseman traveling from town to town in the south and west. The country watched women play professional baseball while the guys were overseas and, even after the war, the leagues kept going strong for a decade or so. She dusted off her old first baseman's mitt from the top shelf in the hallway closet, a well worn leather extension of her right hand shaped like a claw to scoop up balls thrown in the dirt from over-anxious infielders, and walked to the backyard like a free agent. I was the other

southpaw on our ragtag team and, whenever I could pull my bat around on a pitch, I would lace a bullet down the line and watch it rattle like a pinball between the trunk of a large cottonwood tree and a chain link fence enclosing right field. Unless the fielder played it perfectly, I would race to third with an easy triple.

Some afternoons were so hot and humid that we could barely sweat out nine innings before escaping into her cool basement to play Monopoly and drink pitchers of ice water or sun tea. David Flotron was the top dog at chess until I studied a chess book from the library.

One afternoon it rained so hard, sheets of water and loud crackles of thunder nearby. Nobody showed up. The family had left somewhere. Alone, with little to do, I pulled out a Reader's Digest Condensed Book from Aunt Virginia's shelf and curled up on the bed in the back bedroom. The rain cooled the air outside and a large window fan pushed out the heat from inside the house. The noise from the fan blocked out any possible distraction. I turned the first page of Harper Lee's spellbinding *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The novel was about a lawyer, a widower named Atticus Finch. The novel was cleverly written from the point of view of his daughter, 11 year old Jean Louise Finch. She was "Scout" to everyone who knew her. The court appointed Atticus to represent Tom Robinson, a black man falsely accused of raping a white girl.

Black folks were allowed to watch Tom's long awaited trial from the Colored Balcony. Scout snuck upstairs, too. Scout always wore overalls but this day she had to wear a Sunday dress. Reverend Sykes, the elderly preacher from the Baptist Church in the Quarters, kept a seat for Scout on the first pew but mostly she sprawled on the floor so she could stick her head between the balcony rails, well set to watch the goings on below. After all the witnesses testified, the prosecutor and Mr. Finch gave closing arguments before the jury retired to deliberate. In no time, the all-white jury returned into the courtroom and the foreman announced their verdict: guilty as charged. The bailiff escorted them out back. The judge disappeared into his chambers. Tom stood up until the deputies hurried him away to the jail to await sentencing on another day. The

prosecution and all those from the first floor, with faces fixed like flint, emptied the courtroom.

Atticus, the last to leave, struggled a little standing up. Gathering his papers, he snapped shut his weathered briefcase and turned around to face row after row of gallery seats. All those in the balcony sat still, tear-filled eyes darting in silent disbelief of the verdict handed down. Atticus walked slowly down the aisle toward the main door, the wooden planks faintly creaking with each tired step. Then everyone upstairs rose, everyone except Scout.

“Stand up, Miss Jean Louise,” nudged Reverend Sykes. “Your father’s passin’.”

So many emotions coursed through my veins when I first read that passage. Even today I can hardly sort them out. I could hardly imagine the injustice of an innocent man wrongly convicted, let alone what would happen to Tom. I also feared for Atticus and Scout as others expressed anger, ignorance and outrage after the conviction of a black man for molesting a white girl. Most of all, I was proud of Atticus. I admired his moral courage, his stoic calm, his empathy for those less fortunate. Other than Scout, who was discovering the ways of the world, everyone stood to respect Atticus. Even in utter defeat. Unlike John Kennedy’s public service, Atticus Finch practiced in his segregated Southern town. Both were heroes in their own unique ways. Both made a difference.

I guess I dozed off after the last page, interrupted by Aunt Virginia telling me through the closed bedroom door that dinner was about ready. Mostaccioli with tomato sauce and ground beef, baked in sturdy ironware, a wedding gift that the Holzums used every day of their long life together. The dinner was set for my family of five, Aunt Virginia and Uncle Al. They would not adopt their two children yet for several years. The kitchen was small with black and white linoleum tile floor and a radio set to KMOX for news and Cardinal baseball games. The dining room had a large table for eight or more, a thin carpet floor and arched doorways built by Al after World War II on the empty corner lot.

I was not too interested in where everyone went for the day, nervously biding my time to talk about the mockingbird novel.

“You see,” I interrupted at last, “Sport is eleven years old.”

“That’s your age, isn’t it?” asked Uncle Al, who must have known the answer.

“Yep. But more important, you see, I want to be a lawyer, a lawyer just like her father.”

“That sounds wonderful,” said Aunt Gin, “but don’t you want some more peas?”

I did and, looking back, I could not expect my excitement to be shared by the others. Mom had her hands full feeding Tom and Ken, Dad’s mind was on his father’s failing business, and Uncle Al and Aunt Gin had countless other young nephews and nieces and neighbor children excited by this or that during dinner. Who could have known but, firmly planted that rainy afternoon were the seeds of my legal career, a career that would span the rest of my life.

Like all things, the vacation in Saint Louis ended and Dad drove us 300 miles northeast back to Chicago. I slept most of the way in the well of the back seat, my head propped up by the driveshaft hump, dreaming uncluttered dreams of lawyers, Saint Louis, baseball, home, school, sport cars and everything in between.

The winter of 1966-1967 was our tenth and last in Chicago, and with it came the Big Snow. Dad was stranded in Saint Louis, waiting several days until they cleared runways at Chicago’s O’Hare Airport. On the news, they were asking those who could return to cars stranded on the highway to plant a broom stick or something on top of the roof for the snowplows to work around. The historic nature of the storm was brought home when we pried open our garage door from a drift of snow. The door slowly rolled up, revealing a solid wall of packed snow. At the very top, a sliver of sunlight peeked through one corner. We looked out, imprisoned inside an eight-foot fortress of snow. Mom, my two younger brothers and I had no reason to worry. We had heat and water, and plenty of canned foods. A Boy Scout troop stopped door to door, asking if we needed anything, before they marched along two-foot street signs to the grocery store, its shelves all but stripped clean by hoarders. It took many days and countless shovels before mom and I dug our driveway out to the street. We

cast the snow from our shovel onto a massive pile in the front yard. That pile became a rock hard castle that withstood the test of time. Not eternity, but it did stand until a warm afternoon in April when the Cubs played their first game at Wrigley Field.

CHAPTER SEVEN: WHEN IN ROME...

WE HAIL A TAXI at the train station and the driver agrees to wait until we check into our little hotel and then drive us to a good place to eat. "You cannot starve in Rome" he explained in his best English to Ian. We laugh. His first two choices are closed for the holiday but the third is worth the wait. Ian and I quickly switch our orders to a pasta with meat and tomato sauce after overhearing our waiter tell another table that the restaurant is known for that special dish. Content to follow the waiter's lead, I order the Chianti Castello di Montespertoli Riserva. Who can go wrong with a vintage Castello?

"When in Rome..." I start to say. Ian casts a quick frown in my direction and I stop, mid-sentence. Sometimes, dare I say often, less is more.

Twice when I lived in Germany, my brother Tom and mom visited me for a couple of weeks. I would carefully plan out where we would visit. During one of those trips the three of us took a tour bus from Munich to Florence, Rome, the Isle of Capri and back. The Vatican was part of the well-oiled tour and our private group spent some quiet time in the Sistine Chapel with a dozen or so other tourists. I sat down on a chair along the outer side, gazed at the ceiling and wondered if God is surrounded by a human brain – cerebrum, brain stem, basilar artery, pituitary stalk – as others have noticed. Of course Michelangelo was well schooled in human anatomy and would know from studying cadavers the fissure in the front of the reddish brown human brain. But could he have known about the functions of its parts when he painted God's arm and finger extending just above that fissure to touch Adam? Could Michelangelo have known, in 1522, that the prefrontal cortex houses complex executive functions, our ability to know right from wrong, our awareness of God Himself? Did Michelangelo choose the most evolved portion of the human brain, I wondered, by knowledge, chance or divine inspiration?

And there is no mistaking the navel painted on Adam's belly. This "innie" surely signifies, at least in Michelangelo's vision, Adam was not created from clay as a literal reading of the bible might suggest. Rather, the first homo sapien entered the world by pushing the crown of his head through his mother's womb into the light of the world beyond, his umbilical cord in tow. Michelangelo depicted Adam being touched by the finger of God, not his pre-human parents. But this natural idea that Adam was born from his mother would surely send many modern day Christian fundamentalists into a tizzy.

ON THIS HOLY DAY Europeans have flocked to Rome and the lines at every venue are staggering. A well-spoken hustler in the street leads us to a nearby office where we buy the English V.I.P. guided tour package of the Vatican, avoiding an impossible four hour wait at the back of the line only to stand in the front for forty minutes. Ian and I are squished against bodies, herded like cattle toward an exit at the far corner. They now protect the works of art along the walls with clear plexiglas barriers. After years of painstaking restoration they have removed centuries of dull grime and dark soot, revealing the vivid colors of the artist's palette. But I have little time to see, less time to ponder these questions, no time to celebrate the beauty of this holy place. We trample under the sublime, our senses dulled by a sea of humanity flowing steadily toward the exit door and the plaza square outside. Quickly my anticipation of seeing the icon one last time has turned to disappointment.

"I could barely look at the ceiling," Ian complains as the tour ends. "People were pressed against me on each side. I had to look down every step of the way."

"Me too. It happened so fast. It's so different from the last time. You do believe me?"

He does. After we cut through more lines to collect my camera, I take stills of him strolling through Saint Peter's Square. Once I visited Rome alone and sat in this Square on a fold-out chair near the middle aisle. Tens of thousands of us had gathered for Easter Mass. Pope John Paul II, Karol Józef Wojtyła, walked a few feet away, and it was as if he blessed each of us personally as he slowly approached the altar in front.

“Now he’s canonized as a saint,” I brag to Ian.

“I know that.” Ian doesn’t like when I teach him something he already knows.

Unfazed, I ask, “can you picture your old man sitting right here in an ocean of gray metal chairs?”

My question was a rhetorical one and Ian just looks out at the immense dimensions of Saint Peter’s Square. After a silence, he asks, “was it a long mass?”

“Over two hours,” I reply, “but nobody minded, at least none of us that had seats. Many had traveled long distances from all corners of the globe just to be there. My trip from Augsburg was nothing compared to some sitting around me.”

Before the mass, I recall listening to people from Africa, South America, even a large family from the Philippines. John Paul II was fluent in ten languages and, as they broadcast his homily over loudspeakers, I tried to guess each language one by one. The English part was so thoughtful. I’ve long since forgotten his words but even today I remember feeling a sense of calm and determination as he led the Free World in the midst of the Cold War.

Walking beside Ian, I try to imagine what it would be like preaching to tens of thousands, hundreds of millions on television and radio. I think about at my first year of public speaking. I felt anything but calm. Speech and debate were recommended activities for a future lawyer to master and, in 10th grade, I challenged a senior coed to be an orator at the state tournament. There were two debate classes. The afternoon class was for upperclassmen, freshmen and sophomores were in the morning class. Mr. Shafer, our debate coach, decided that both of us would deliver our memorized eight-minute speeches to the afternoon class. The class would vote and the winner would represent the school at state.

I went first and gathered confidence in my oration about poverty in America. “If you give a man a fish,” I quoted, “he’ll eat that day. Teach him how to fish, and he’ll eat every day.”

Suddenly, without warning, I forgot the next line. I had practiced my speech so many times and could hardly imagine stumbling in the middle. I had delivered it without

a hitch at my first competition at Belleville West, the last speaker competing against students from other high schools, slipping up the steps to the awards platform to grab one of many first place trophies for our school. But here, in front of older classmates, Tom Reed and Mike Ogilvie and all the seniors from the other debate class, my brain went blank. What might have been a pregnant pause to others seemed an eternity to me. Finally the words returned and my speech continued. But it felt like someone had let the air out of my tires. All momentum was lost and, I must have known, so was the competition. The senior girl won, as expected. She went to state, not me. I walked home after school tasting a bitter lesson in humility.

SITTING ON TOP of a two tier tour bus, I notice Ian absorbed by something on his cellphone. I guess I never told him about my tongue tied speech. Instead I twirl the wire on a cheap pair of cheap ear plugs I am wearing. I plug the wire into a jack on my chair and turn to channel 2 for English speakers. I am listening to the voice of a woman describe in clipped phrases each approaching historical sites. The bus nearly empties itself at the Coliseum, but the lines there are nearly as long as Vatican City. I am exhausted from that experience and content driving around Rome in the comfort of a top deck seat. Ian doesn't budge either.

I feel obliged to see the sights when I travel. I don't want to miss out on something important. But without fail I find myself more interested in the commonplace, the local customs and ways of ordinary people away from the tourist traps. So it is with Rome where, at one stop, I yawn at the next important historic site and the disembodied English voice in my earplugs droning on and on. I glance down the street where a groundskeeper is rolling white chalk lines every ten meters onto freshly cut green grass. It is a neighborhood field and he is working swiftly yet carefully for an upcoming match. It must be football, the most popular sport in Italy. The most popular sport in the world, except America.

In America we play our own brand of football and call theirs soccer. Watching meticulously straight chalk lines in the noontime Roman sun, my thoughts turn to another sport. During my youth, spring and summer belonged to

baseball. The Bermuda grass was just as green, tightly cropped and not a dandelion or patch of crabgrass anywhere. The crew rolled two lines of chalk from home plate to the foul poles in left and right field.

Like any able-bodied boy, I had my moments of glory playing America's favorite pastime. One Saturday afternoon Aunt Gin watched a game at Manchester Ballpark. We were hosting the first place team. Their ace, a lanky lefty my age, must have hit puberty early with his first growth moustache. A man among boys, not to mention his nasty fastball and a wicked curve.

The game was scoreless in the bottom of the seventh when our lead off batter struck out. I heard my name, jumped off the bench and picked up my mitt. Coach yelled "on deck" and pointed at the bats. I figured they would need me in the outfield if the game headed into extra innings, not a left handed batter to be slaughtered by their star southpaw. I tried big breaths as I walked to the on-deck circle behind home plate and, before I could take one knee, the ump called strike three on our second batter. As I pushed myself toward the plate, I looked at the pitcher. I could barely swallow, fearing how it must feel to get beamed by one of his hard pitches.

Two strikes zipped by in the blink of an eye. I looked at the umpire and stepped out of the box. I took off my dark blue helmet and felt a slight breeze cool beads of sweat from the top of my scalp. I kept thinking not to strike out and force the game into extra innings. Or at least I would not just stand there for the umpire to call strike three. At least I was going down swinging.

I put my helmet back on and stood back in the box. As I started my swing, the ball sailed off the corner of the plate. I reached out, closed my eyes and swung with all my might. A vibration where I gripped the wooden handle stung my hands. I somehow managed to hit the ball between the shortstop and the third baseman's glove into left field, a fluke single that cracked my bat in two.

I took a small lead off first base and watched the pitcher's face. He started to lose his composure. One throw over but I slid back in. The umpire motioned "safe" with his hands outstretched. I quickly dusted the dirt off the side of my crisp white knickerbockers and the Dodger blue stirrup

above my right ankle. Another throw over but, this time, I kept one cleat hugging the bag.

James was our next hitter, and a good one. Each time the pitcher threw to first, James dug a hole with his cleats like a proud colt clawing at the ground with one hoof before a mad gallop. My lucky single had ruined the pitcher's no-hitter but he could force our scoreless duel into extra innings with just one more out. Instead he uncorked a wild pitch that headed right at James. James yelped and dove out of the way as the catcher grunted, lunging for the errant throw. I could hear a loud metal chink as the ball sailed all the way to the chain link backstop. The catcher ran the ball down but, by the time he wheeled around and cocked it behind his right ear, I was standing on second base. He glared in my direction; like a Cheshire cat, I grinned right back.

The catcher shook his head, asked for time out, and walked toward the mound. The infielders joined in the huddle. I didn't see, but the pitcher must have stuffed the ball into the shortstop's mitt. Once the home plate umpire called "play ball," they hoped, I would take a lead off second thinking the pitcher was holding the ball in his mitt as he stood by the rubber. The shortstop would sneak behind me and tag me out.

Our first base coach must have seen this coming as he yelled to me from his spot in foul territory, "stay on the bag!"

I did. Believe me, I kept one foot on the bag. Representing the winning run on second, I wasn't going to lose this chance by a stupid hidden ball trick. Reluctantly the shortstop tossed the ball underhanded back to the pitcher. They barely noticed James tapping the plate with his bat. After ball two, the third pitch was the charm. The southpaw hung one over the middle of the plate. I heard the ball strike the barrel of James' bat as he pulled a clean hit to left-center.

The outfielders were playing shallow. In the late innings of a close game, if a runner on second scores, that's the ball game. So they were playing shallow enough to throw me out with a good throw. Once the ball made it through the infield it was time to run and, when the third base coach

made a windmill signal for me to score, I could not see anything behind me.

I rounded third and ran as hard as I could for home.

The catcher was crouched, his mitt ready to take the throw. The umpire stood behind him, bent forward, arms on his hips. I slid in head first. The throw came in too late.

“Safe!”

The umpire’s arm shot out.

We won!

Teammates poured out of our dugout to mob James and me. Boys piled on boys like a rugby scrum. Tears welled up in their pitcher’s eyes as he ran off the field. Not only had we defeated Khoury League’s best team, we broke up their no-hitter and scored the only run of the ballgame in the bottom of the last inning. Our coaches were so happy they ordered soft vanilla ice cream cones for everyone. Even Aunt Gin got one, and a cream soda too.

IAN IS NAPPING next to me on the top deck as the sights of Rome become a blur. I am glad Ian did some sports as a child, though it took some prodding from me. I was the assistant coach as his grade school basketball team, thanks to his kindergarten buddy Matt Smallwood who towered over everyone his age, went undefeated in fifth grade and lost in the semifinals the next year. Everyone who made the team played one quarter in every game, so I devised roles for the less talented. I was the first-base coach for his little league team when it upset the perennial city champions and went to the regionals in Espanola. Ian started at second base, pitched a few games, and even batted fourth. His best moment was not catching or hitting or pitching the ball; it was not swinging at ball four, a screaming fastball thrown inside by the league’s best pitcher. Ian just stood there like a statue.

In Ian’s first two years at St. Michael’s High School, I was the head coach for the debate team. I would collect twelve or more students before first period. I drove a little yellow bus to Los Alamos, Wagon Mound and schools in between. In Ian’s sophomore year, we won the state chess championship. Ian went undefeated as the third board, barely escaping checkmate in the first round. Like my stint in Augsburg, I wanted to coach swimming again but Ian balked at an early age. Ian switched to public high school in

his junior year, got stoned and missed graduation by one-half credit, but he does have some sport stories to tell. To me, that is important. I coached his teams to give him something, to spend time with him. Ian is too fiercely independent ever to stand on my shoulders or learn from my mistakes, and he is not excited by playing competitive sports. He loves to watch sports and, at least, he has some achievements from his youth.

CHAPTER EIGHT: VIA RASCOLI

ADD

THE AIRPORT IN FLORENCE is too far to walk so we hail a taxi. A teenage girl greets us outside as we collect our luggage and I pay the fare. She is wearing a smart dress with neatly combed hair and shiny black shoes.

The girl brings us to a machine where we can confirm our flight and print out our seat reservations. She quickly enters the confirmation number and the machine spits out two tickets. She turns around and says, point blank, "Twenty Euros, please."

I feel kinda hustled and look at Ian. "Can you believe this?"

He just smirks and holds out his palms.

I reach into my pocket for a Twenty and pay our clever young helper.

She smiles politely as she grabs my crisp bill and then turns to Ian. "Twenty Euros, please."

Ian's cavalier smile becomes a frown as she holds her hand out to him. "What?" he squawks, looking at me.

"Twenty Euros," she repeats, still looking at Ian.

"Look, young lady," I interject. "This is highway robbery. You should have told..."

"I don't understand," she interrupts, smiling with what might otherwise pass for innocent brown eyes. She holds out her palm and shakes it a little.

"No," Ian says forcefully, in his best Italian.

"No way," I add, walking away from her.

She does not follow us. At first I worry about making a scene. As her simple little con dawns on me, I find the whole thing funny. "I should have taken a picture with my iPhone."

"Of what?" Ian sees no humor in the situation. "That little scam artist?"

“No, the look on your face when she demanded money from you, too.”

“Twenty Euros was your deal.” Ian says with an air of incredulity. “No way was I going to give her another Twenty.”

“Yeah, even Twenty was too much. She must have taken us for a pair of dumb Americans.”

“You’re the one who paid her,” Ian points out. “Not me.”

“OK, one dumb American father. I felt like I was expected to pay. She seemed like some kind of airport helper and it happened so fast.”

CHAPTER NINE: A THIEF IN PARIS

WE ARRIVE BY PLANE to Charles De Gaul Airport in Paris and soon Ian is in a panic having left his passport in the pocket in front of his seat. Later something worse happens to me as we take the subway crowded with people. My passport is stuffed in the bottom of my backpack but the press of people masks a group of young teenaged girls picking pockets or, in my case, my backpack. At the next rude stop someone tells me that my backpack is unzipped and I quickly discover what has happened.

Ian is very upset. “Dad, how could you be so stupid to leave your passport in your backpack. You were supposed to keep it in the belt pocket around your waist.”

I look at him in silence, my face crestfallen and my body hunched over in defeat.

“What can we do now?” he asks. His tone and mannerism reveal more than a touch of fear. We were both very concerned when we could not re-board the plane to collect his passport even though we knew exactly where Ian had misplaced it. This time we knew where my passport went, into the hands of thieves along with a hundred Euros or more. That time a friendly stewardess found the passport where we said it was and brought it out much to our relief. This time, there would be no easy solution.

Fear, like all emotions, is irrational. Emotions exist alongside and independent of reason and our intellectual faculties. That does not mean that we cannot fathom why

we feel whatever we are feeling. In Ian's case, I think the source of his primal fear is seeing his aging dad, sensing my helplessness, and realizing his own unpreparedness to cope with life's tougher blows. Ian relied throughout his childhood upon me to know what was necessary. I offered a strong compass even as he rebelled and chose a different direction. He could always retreat to my sanctuary. Sitting alone on the subway bench with me, however, he sees my ashen face and senses my bewilderment. We are in a foreign country. My passport and our money has been stolen by teenaged thieves in part due to my stupidity.

This was not the first time my passport was stolen abroad. In college

CHAPTER TEN: THE OXFORD UNION

WE DRIVE TO OXFORD. Xx scene xx

I finished my active military duty as a lawyer and moved to Oxford for a year. The University enchanted me with xxits I thought could be a post-graduate student there, and hold a little longer onto my political dreams. The first few months I attended St. Aldate's College and boarded in Littlemore, a blue collar neighborhood on the outskirts of town. There I learned the joys of snooker, a British version of billiards with fifteen reds and six other colored balls. The best players competed for large cash prizes in televised matches, the crowd at the hall and he few in our living room hushed as a pro aimed his cue for a decisive shot into the corner pocket.

After Littlemore I moved into De la Salle House, 1 Marston Ferry Road. The Christian Brothers, known as de La Salle Brothers in Europe, are a Catholic order devoted to teaching. They were affiliated with Greyfriars Hall, an ancient Franciscan college founded in 1224. Brother Edwin was in charge and rounding out the regular tenants were: a priest studying at the university; Brother Alexis Duval, a fellow post-graduate student; Tony Hill and Mark Radosevich, two Greyfriars undergraduates with no particular religious intentions, and myself. With at least four extra bedrooms and a grand mahogany dining room table that sat 10 or 12, we often entertained overnight and short-term guests. Once Brother Edwin took in a family of Vietnamese refugees, boat people, and the distinct smell of curry wound its way up the back staircase to my bedroom.

The smell was delightful, but it put an abrupt halt to my studies.

Xxx “The pen is mightier than the sword,” I thought, “but neither can unring a dinner bell!”

Years after we left, Greyfriars closed its doors. Another college tore down the mansion and built brick dorms in its place. The public swimming pool where I swam laps is still across the street. The house next door, 3 Marston Ferry, still stands. Ivy covers every brick. A white dove perches atop the chimney. I point my camera at the dove in time to capture its picture. I should email this to mom. She loves to mention whenever a feather falls in her path, as they often do, each feather a divine confirmation of her plumbline.ⁱⁱ

In 492 BC, the rank and file of Greek warriors assembled into a phalanx and watched a fleet of 300 Persian ships rounding the southern peninsula of Mount Athos. The calm seas soon erupted into a northerly gale, unfurling the Persian sails and casting the ships headlong toward the shore. The Greeks faced into the wind bitten rain, ready for combat against far superior numbers. But this battle between Greeks and Persians was not to be. The ships never reached shore as the tempest smashed them into bits against the jagged rocks. Herodotus reported nearly 20,000 drowned as unforgiving waves claimed the life of every man aboard, but not life itself. For in an ebb between the swells, amid human carnage, a solitary bird grasped onto a piece of floating wreckage. It was a brilliant white dove. Soon several birds, then dozens, escaped their watery hold. All of a sudden, all at once, they took flight. Their soft wings brushed against white capped waves, soaring upward and homeward, ever in unison, until they faded against the dark Aegean horizon. Never before had the Greeks seen such birds and they told all who would listen about the shipwrecks and especially the flight of doves. Each bird, they said, was the loving soul of a sailor lost at sea.

In 1864 a Spaniard returned from Cuba to write the song *La Paloma* about these legendary white doves. “Si a tu ventana llega una paloma, Trátala con cariño que es mi persona – if to your window arrives a dove, treat her with kindness for she is my persona.” Two years later he died in

obscurity, never to learn how beloved his song would become around the world.

There is no storm today, no ships, no jagged rock. Yet la paloma is perched above our chosen path.

“See,” I show Ian the picture of the dove on my iPhone, “the Holy Spirit watches over us even now.”

Ian looks at the picture and back at the dove still perched on its outpost. He says nothing. I am pleased. Not long ago he would have asserted his belief in Buddha or atheism. I am not sure if he is silent out of respect or belief, but at least he listens without angst or acrimony.

Twice a week I commuted half an hour from Marston Ferry to Upper Heyford Air Force Base. The wheels on my little Honda motorcycle tilted into the wind like a gyroscope. Every other week I would fill up my two-gallon gasoline tank. Like T.E. Lawrence in the opening scene from *Lawrence of Arabia*, months after leaving military service I died in a motorcycle accident on an English back road.

Well, nearly so. I came upon the back road roundabout as I had countless times. This time a careless gardener over watered nearby trees, covering the asphalt pavement with a slippery sheet of mud. My bike crashed to one side. It was heading right into the path of a lorry truck. The driver locked his brakes but the heavy rig could not stop. Like sliding on ice, momentum carried me just past its front bumper and into a bed of wet flowers! Tires screeched behind me. I stood up and noticed a cut at the knee of my waterproof outer layer but, underneath, my suit pant leg was like new. I lifted the bike up. A rear-view mirror was broken. Otherwise I was good to go so, ignoring the gardener's frantic gestures, I kick started the Honda and continued on my way to class. Have you heard of dodging a bullet? In solitude, the wind hummed one note around my windshield and I thanked God for dodging a truck. It was not my time.

After three years as a young Army lawyer in Germany, I took a European Out program and moved to Oxford. Tuesdays and Thursdays each semester, I taught business law on the base to American and British airmen. The Army paid the tuition for my post-graduate classes. This job with the University of Maryland paid my bills. For a single guy

not ready to return to the States, I could not complain. Years later I would meet one of the airmen in Santa Fé. His sons and mine completed their Eagle Scout requirements together.

Notwithstanding fresh memories like yesterday, gone are the peace camp outside the base and the classrooms inside the front gate. The entire base was phased out after the Cold War. I feel empty about the house, the base, Greyfriars. All are gone. I can only search for tiny traces of the past. Not just my past, the house was 100 years old, more like 900 years for Greyfriars Hall.

"Time and tide wait for no man," I muse out loud, adding, "Chaucer."

I look at Ian. The text he is reading on his cell phone must be funny. I have learned not to ask about his texts, for he values his privacy. Still, he sits to my left, a sure lifeline to the present. On some existential level, I seem to be drifting alone in this passage of time. As hard as I might struggle to express these thoughts and feelings to him, and to you, words only go so far. Silence can convey emotions, even thoughts, but only so far. Is death a little like this? Even for those surrounded by loved ones at their death bed, *mach nichts* – it matters not. We leave this mortal world just as we entered it from our mother's womb, through darkness and utter confusion, terrified, naked and alone. We leave alone.

I shake free from this melancholy. The drive down Banbury Road towards the center of town looks the same. Parking is as miserable as always, even between terms. I grab a space near Oxford Union, a splendid building I so wanted to visit. The doors are locked between Trinity and Michaelmas terms. The sign says members only. As a lifetime member, I proudly give Ian a tour of the grounds.

"Your old man debated in this hallowed hall." I look at Ian, who dutifully walks alongside me. "In February 1984 the Union asked me to debate Resolved: There is no Moral Difference between the Foreign Policies of the US and the USSR. A reserve Army officer opposing Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, the keynote speaker – a little controversy sure to liven the evening." I picture the hall, filled to capacity. It was easy to spot Brigadier General Colin Powell in the front row with his crisp Army uniform.

“Did you wear your uniform?” asks Ian.

“No. We talked about it, but someone at the embassy said ‘no way.’ Good thing too. My Captain bars and three tiny ribbons were no match for a General’s star and a uniform filled row after row with ribbons and medals. Just looking at Powell made my knees twitch.”

Ian laughs.

I spoke about how our principals were sinking to the level of our adversary. “Why,” I asked, “did we overthrow Salvador Allende after democratic elections in Chile? Why is the WWII Battleship New Jersey lobbing 300 sixteen-inch shells into Beirut?” There were reasons, of course. We attacked those who had killed that many Marines in their barracks, but one stray shell leveled a hospital.

After my speech Lawrence Grafstein, a Rhodes Scholar from Toronto, walked slowly to the podium. With a measured cadence that could march an Army, he began, “America is not a lie, it’s a disappointment. And it’s a disappointment because it is a dream.”

“What did he mean by that?”

“He was talking about American ideals. We aim for ideals but never reach perfection.” I frown. “The debate was slowly turning away from Reagan’s rudderless foreign policy.”

“I don’t get it.”

“Their strategy was to avoid the topic of foreign policy blunders and brag about how great America is. Brits love America, warts and all.” Years later, Professor E. P. Thompson, the second to last speaker and the last to support the resolution, wrote a letter saying my speech had been the most serious of the night. No matter, I explain to Ian, “the night belonged to Secretary Weinberger, not us.”

“He pointed out how a junior Captain in the Russian Army would be shipped off to a Siberian asylum for speaking against his Minister of Defense. The crowd laughed.”

“Uh oh.”

“Uh oh is right. Weinberger rallied the crowd behind freedom of speech and democratic principles common between Britain and America. He was eloquent, but what about the resolution on the floor? What about our unprincipled actions abroad?”

“Did you ask that?”

“No, I had my say. The floor was his. After he finished, the house defeated the resolution.” The tally was 271-232. “Professor Thompson did take one consolation from the evening.”

“How so?”

“Two weeks later Reagan ordered the New Jersey to pull anchor and leave Lebanon in its wake. Weinberger won the debate, but Professor Thompson stopped the carnage.”

Ian listens but says nothing. I remember news accounts the next morning scattered over the mahogany table. The Oxford rag had a byline about the US Army captain. The London Times, the Washington Post and New York Times mentioned the debate but left that footnote out. Mark, Tony and two other students talked about their vantage points during the debate. Mark is the good-natured son of a Greek shipping magnate. The other students called him “Tuby” because of his wide girth. He described how he could not get inside and had to listen to the debate from speakers set up for the crowd overflowing outside.

I quipped that, with Mark nowhere to be seen, my opening line became: “Tubee or not Tubee. That is the question.”

This clever theft from Hamlet brought an instant roar of laughter from my bright young peers, Mark included. I basked in their approval. It’s a moment I still cherish. Unlike most of my puns this was funny then and, to some extent, even now. But good humor is the least of it. Like a picture, this one moment captures the debate, my friends, the year at Oxford.

After a long silence, I look at Ian. “I’ll never forget that debate.”

Ian walks by my side, our steps in sync like marching soldiers. Someday, when I am long gone, Ian will read this book and remember this story. He will remember this day.

Ian and I leave the Oxford Union grounds to share a quick meal at a Chinese restaurant on the corner. XX
Inside, several international students cannot afford to travel home between terms. Afterwards Ian is tired but we take New Road toward Justice Walk. We stop by the Central Library at Westgate.

Thirty years ago to the month, I parked my motorcycle outside this library. I knew then I would never earn a degree at Oxford, as I had dreamed. XX WHY XX Abandoning politics once and for all, it was time to press forward as a lawyer. I pulled out a large atlas and, after hours of study, chose Santa Fé over Denver, Flagstaff and Hawai'i. I would move to Santa Fé, a charming state capital influenced by Anglo, Hispanic and Native American cultures. The Honda drove itself back to Marston Ferry. I thought of little else besides this new intention to leave Europe at term's end.

I walked upstairs and put my helmet on the bed. The doorbell rang. Nobody answered. It rang again. I retraced my steps and opened the front door. A well dressed American stood there.

As he began to introduce himself, I interrupted, "So you're to stay the night?"

He nodded.

"Well, your timing is excellent," I explained. "Dinner is served."

"That sounds wonderful," he replied, hustling his luggage from the porch.

Everyone was seated at the table before Brother Edwin tapped his glass. "I would like everyone to meet our guest, a Christian Brother on sabbatical from St. John's College in America. They have one campus in Annapolis, the other in Santa Fé."

Startled, I spilled water as I quietly poured a glass. No one noticed my error as Edwin finished the brief introduction. To me, the arrival of the good professor was more than mere coincidence. Santa Fé means "holy faith," and even a blind man could see the Holy Spirit confirming my new intention!

My impatience got the better of me. The professor was talking to a student beside him when I interrupted from across the grand table. "Santa Fé? I've never been there!"

Too many questions later, the professor wrote down the name of Brother Bryan Dybowski, a philosophy and religion professor at the College of Santa Fé. He might be able to offer me room and board until I got my feet on the ground.

For good reason, engineers design rear view mirrors to be much smaller than front windshields. At times we may glance back at the past for lessons learned, but we should concentrate our very best efforts on the present and near future. Thirty years ago, bound for Santa Fé, I never looked back.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE WAY HOME

ADD

In the early days of airline travel, two passengers sat in the first-class seats. One was a large untidy gentleman and the other a prim and proper lady with Ginger, her tiny lap dog. The large man pulls out a Cuban cigar and puffs away. The lady is incensed because it is forbidden to smoke in the first-class compartment. Ginger starts to cough. White ash from his cigar falls on his lap as he nods asleep. With a burst of energy the woman seizes the cigar, sprints to the lavatory, and flushes it down the toilet. The man, startled by what she has done, suddenly realizes it is equally forbidden to carry animals in the first class compartment. With a furious movement, he scoops up the unfortunate dog and flushes it down the toilet!

The lady is sobbing at the sudden death of a beloved companion when, miracle of miracles, she glances outside the window and sees her Ginger, windswept and clinging to the airplane wing. But there was something in it's mouth. Can you guess what was in the dog's mouth?"

"The cigar?" asks Ian, nibbling at the bait.

"No," I reply, "the extra brick."

I keep my best poker face despite Ian's pained expression. He bursts into laughter first but I start to laugh uncontrollably, tears welling up in my eyes. Ian stops laughing and points to the other passengers. We are becoming a nuisance. I agree and try to catch my breath. It took three weeks to deliver this punch line, but it was well worth the wait.

I had to take several military courses to be promoted to Major in the US Army Reserves. I drove my old gold Chevette down from Clovis early Saturday to my ride in Portales, another young officer, and we would car pool down from his house to Roswell for the class. We would drive back at the end of the day and repeat the exercise the following morning. One Saturday I missed my ride and

drove all the way down. Unlike law classes, these military classes bored me to tears and had little to do with anything that interested me apart from getting my promotion.

I was driving back home to Clovis on US Route 70 as I approached an arroyo or dry riverbed near the Pecos River. The sun was warming the side of my face and I drifted off into sleep behind the wheel. I was jarred awake by the sound of my right wheels sailing off the ground after hitting a dirt embankment. The car flew above a rickety barbed wire cattle guard and straddled the span of a bridge. At the far end was a concrete viaduct that protected bridge support structures from water and erosion. Time slowed down so that split seconds felt like many seconds. My left wheels were firmly planted on pavement and the right front tire flattened as it pressed over the top of the viaduct. The right rear tire exploded on impact into the wall and sent the rear axle backward from the car. This impact slowed the car down like the tail hook of an aircraft carrier grabbing a plane trying to land. It grabbed off center, forcing the car away from the pavement and through another dirt embankment, borrowing and spinning like a gyroscope, out of control. I lost any sense of direction and leaned to the right as the roof caved in and the windows smashed into popcorn kernels. The crash was as loud as a locomotive train next to my ear. When would it stop?

The car ended up on its flat tires heading backwards in roughly the same direction I had been driving before I lost control. The silence was as deafening as the noise had been to my ringing ears. Afraid the car might explode, I tried to push my door open and then kicked it open enough to crawl out. My military uniform, my face and hands were caked with fine dirt as it rained down on the crash site. I shook off the glass kernels, emerged from the dirt cloud and saw my buddy's car. He must have been a little behind me on the way home. He agreed to drive me to Clovis, an extra half hour beyond his home. The driver of third car was headed in the other direction when he saw the dirt cloud, stopped, and agreed to telephone a wrecker for me when he got into Roswell.

The other officer had picked up a young couple who were hitch hiking our way. They were strong bible believers and reminded me to thank God for having lived through

what should have been a horrific one-car accident. I had only one scratch on one knee of my pants.

Two state police officers

Notes: And men go abroad to admire the heights of mountains, the mighty waves of the sea, the broad tides of rivers, the compass of the ocean, and the circuits of the stars, yet pass over the mystery of themselves without a thought.

CHAPTER TWELVE: EPILOGUE

Add

Interrupt I see Erminio the former judge who had been stationed at Kelly barracks before in 60s I explain that all has been razed. He finally gave up on his Volkswagen. He returns to helping family bond someone out. Beautiful courthouse. In final chapter.

NOTES

Where God guides, He provides Billy Graham

Nuremberg trial

Psalm 107:20 and 103:4

Hebrews 11:6 He rewards those who seek him

Logical song Paris, colonel in Mercedes in Augsburg

This mural was discovered in 1981 while walls were being repainted. The mural had been covered over with layers of white paint since the 60s.

Dream

If a man could pass through Paradise in a dream, and have a flower presented to him as a pledge that his soul had really been there, and if he fould that flower in his hand when he awoke Aye, and what then? Saamuel Taylor Coleridge, *Anima Poetae* from the Unpublished

Bridge built by the 291st Battalion next to the Ludendorff Bridge during the Battle at Remagedn. March 1945 Urmal painted by an unknown solder Shortly after the Allies captured the commande in Chief of the Luftwaffe, Hermann Goering, in Augsburg, Neil Larson took only known photograph

Back blaze instead of carbonite

"Our critical day is not the very day of our death, but the whole course of our life. John Donne, *Death's Duel*, pp 9-10 1630

Man's death diminishes me because I am involved in
mankind, and therefor4 never send to know for whom the
bell tolls. It tolls for thee

Dad won stratego Dad loved angel food cake
How'd you like dem apples
Gabe's brother dying early
Nehimail0 10:8
Stairway to Heaven
Debate boy died
Double ruby
Sone landslide
All my words come back to me in shades of mediocrity
But all my words come back to me in shades of mediocrity
Like emptiness in harmony I need someone to comfort
me. Homeward Pound Paul Simon

First trial, 1st grade accused of CSC
Mom going to back of church so someone else could
gain by the spirit
Ian riding the horse at the rodeo around and around

Pard for water,
Broke tooth, not doctor
Dream, bridge, dream car wreck
Borges old man cannot remember meeting when he was
younger. Ian being my younger self pulling out coin from
1977 like story

The movie Wizard of Oz the new version concept of
being good instead of great similar to decision to be a
lawyer and not the President

Oz: Um...you could do a lot worse than John Gale, he's a
good man.

[Oz rises, turns from her and glues one of the fallen
pictures on his moving picture box]

Annie: So are you.

Oz: No, I'm not. I'm many things, but a good man is not
one of them.

Annie: But you could be, if you wanted to.

Oz: Well, that's just it. I don't want to. See Kansas is full of good men, church going men that get married and raise families, men like John Gale. Men like my father, who spent his whole life cleaning the dirt, just to die face down in it. I don't want that, Annie. I don't wanna be a good man, I wanna be great one. I wanna be Harry Houdini and Thomas Edison all rolled into one

Annie: That's all I ever wanted for you, you know?

[Oz turns to look at Annie]

Annie: Greatness.

Oz: Then you understand.

Annie: I do. Do you?

HERE IT IS:

Glinda: For the record, I know you had it in you all along.

Oz: Greatness?

Glinda: No, better than that. Goodness.

Emotion dwells

Ian's falling, same scream as when Zeus ran into the storm

The lyrics of Ian's song, based on a song popular in the 1880s, "Daisy Bell: "Ian, Stephen, all of the live long day. | Life's so pleasin', 'thank God for all this,' we say. | When the goin' gets rough, remember: |My daddy loves me tender. | We'll sing this song as we ride along | On a bicycle built for two."

Riven split in two

"This was a lie."

Cast my cares on You

Psalm 55:22

Fought the good fight finished the race kept the faith

Term busters net

Bergee

Sten

Taffy

At Augustine beauty so"ancient and so new

No fear in moment. Susan Casey rogue eaves

6:30

MVD August 24 @10

2019 galisteo suite K phone # 982-0123 rock wood. A

Zeus dog toy on my lap
Chew toy nylon rope knotted at two ends colors red
yello blue baby can he see colors or simply 50 shades of
grey

Dream cannot move the paradox of Zeno of Velea Italy,
Elea is the arrow cannot move through space, the runner
than cannot run. Could not run away from death Tied to
question of evil.

Saying by Sorenson. Not ornate. In stark contrast to
buildings outside spires gothic? When Augsburg was
banking capital of world. Return taxi Ian content wake up. 3
am in morning quickly reducing to writing sleep.

32" waist canoe now 42"

On Aug 8, 2015, at 9:29 AM, Teddye
<teddyecos@gmail.com> wrote:

Yes, son.
And, put on the whole armor of God Eph 6:10 to?
Also My God (he is yours too) supplies all my needs
according to his riches in glory - and I can do all things
through Christ who strengthens me. These two are
found
in Phillipians 4. I suggest you pray these 3 scriptures
every day.
I do. Well I am not perfect so I do miss a day or two.
Love ya. Oh and where are those sleep scriptures?
One is in psalm three, and psalm four. Have to look the
others up. Love ya. MOM

Bitten by Doberman
Art refusing to meet Mom
Kid with mustang at sonic
Fletcher

Harvey
 Carbo paper
 Black phone
 Ian as Bishop Lamy
 Acts 9:2 if he found any there that belonged to the Way
 he might take them as prisoners
 John Lennon. Canned goods. Otters. Serious man movie
 liked by Robing Williams.
 Way joke weigh.
 Wheat chaff universal
 Williams: Ian has a little bit of me, a little bit of Doris
 and a little bit of something new
 Chasing windmills
 Imhofstrasses 12 apr 2812 room with vegetation
 Lawrence of arabia
 Kyle, luke business law
 Hotel oceania in Florence
 RockRolingStone Jarry Garcia collectors edition 2014 p
 19 Mikal Gilmore, 21 Sept 95"Rock (music) is an art form
 whose most valuable and essential pleasures are founded in
 the knowledge that such moments cannot hold forever"
 Troy movie Achilles mortality
 When it seems like the night black muddy river Jerry
 garcis
 Sold house day before Garcia returned
 Tom and mom came to Europe Sebastian
 912 targa a poor man's dreamcoconut
 Cigarettes
 Tony Morrison people are strange
 Nothing ever is known once and for all
 Pink carnations for valentines, tulips and oriental lilies
 Neuschwanstein don't let it bring you down only castles
 burning
 Psalm The Lord is near for all who call upon him
 Harvey
 Dream of train platform sail beyond, grabbed by
 conductor back to safety, people raicing to train
 Oxford: word brilliant
 Humility
 Via negative, ground of all being, god is being.
 Transcendent mystery. Meister Eckhart
 Emptiness womb

O guiding night. O night more lovely than the dawn
Bellevue house in Florence
Flight to paris 1:15 long, Hotel Sofitel Paris La Defense,
33 Voie des Sculpteurs, Puteaus, Hauts-de-siene
US Airways
Hall and Oats she's gone.
Shakespears Life is a tale told to a fool "Life's but a
walking shadow, a poor player. That struts and frets his
hour upon the stage. And then is heard no more. It is a tale.
Told by an idiot, Shakespear'es Macbeth

Short story by El Otro, el mismo by Jorge Luis Borges
replacing 60 year old.

God meets us [in prayer] where we are but takes us
where He is.

Passing, sitting on a couch Isa 54:14-17

CHAPTER ONE: OUR LOST HERITAGE

NOTES RO COMPLETE CHAPTER: 1967 1968 1969
1970 1971 1972 – Parkway

June 67 Risk, Saladino, wife, unicycle, Tom Reed China,
pediatric surgeon, Peter Mani. Junior Achievement, it of
OCD perfecting way to court, park. Driving dad's boat
perfection, lake st 'Louis chumbley, Steve Dickerson, Globe
Democrat, Ron Shafer, Lynn Dugas, M Forti, Khoury,
Football manager. berger belly dream?, Junior achievement
newspaper

CHAPTER EIGHT: VIA RASCOLI

73-75 Costello what's the difference... Anwar Sadat, flight
home close down Heathrow Frank Sinatra "My Way" seems
to ignore sin of knowledge Original Christians "The Way"
cannot claim to have any special insight into how to live
problem with politics – self aggrandizement. Same with
autobiography except get beyond the and the possibility
that it will never lost or pride fall. Afrikaans, Bosnian,

Italian Irish, germ uber, Acts 9:2 NIV if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. Another biblical quote. Early Christian write re the Way in Latin Civia Joke Weigh. Windshield looking forward rear view mirror much smaller, Universal constants. Drunk reference from Austria

CHAPTER NINE: A THIEF IN PARIS

1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 SLU and Great Falls

law robbed, tower grove, playboy, racer Mary Collins, Karen Carpenter We've Only Just Begun, perseverance on cake, track, urn home to Saint Louis U. Never return home. Dust in Wind Returned to CDA, decision to abandon politics Mother's Day, Father Christmas, unconstitutional, block away, no light bulb for hour along highway check fold out Acti Missouri trip beforehand. Yankton Falls, rets

VISTA power to people unconstitutional hotel lien, YMCA, John Denver lazy man's cross country ski, bed one Fulbot Perseverance – quote from bible SLU – father Christmas, told Great Falls cross country

Aeneas, weeping at a mural depicting carnage and grief in the Trojan Wars which drove him to the foreign shores of Carthage, utters the famous line: *Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt* – “These are the tears of things, and our mortality cuts to the heart” (Aeneid I, line 462). The abiding relevance of Virgil's poem lies in its stark presentation of the human situation. Here we are, all of us, like Aeneas, born into a world we don't understand, struggling against forces we can't control, all the while conscious of our transience and our mortality. *Lacrimae rerum* is the Latin phrase for “tears of things.” It derives from Book I, line 462 of the Aeneid (c. 29–19 BC) written by Roman poet Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro) (70–19 BC). Yet in the next line, Aeneas says: “Release (your) fear; this fame will bring you some deliverance” but fame brings no deliverance from . Lacrima tear, res thing. He is among good people and he need not fear for his safety... Fame vs. lawyering

CHAPTER TEN: THE OXFORD UNION

Chapter Oxford: William Darrell, died 1461, fellow All Souls ejected by Parliament

Herodotus, (The Histories, VI.44).

NOTES Chap 10 OXFORD: busing table at Marston Ferry

CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE WAY HOME

1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994
1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004
Clovis Santa Fé

Face the fear 1985 Clovis Stone Phillips, Olympics 84,
Death Comes for the Archbishop, Home Jerry Garcia here
Jerry Garcia knocked on the door to his old house in
Stinson Beach, looked around, and told his estranged
girlfriend Carolyn "Mountain Girl" Garcia "I'm moving
back in." She was so happy to see him but, unfortunately,
the day before he knocked she had sold the house. Garcia
24.

Commutations CRASH IN CLOVIS 85 Miscarriage – Ian
Mrs. Pong Joke Death of Dad, Death of Florence, Death of
Gin Death of Al Becker's Deli, Plays Shakespeare, Terry
Clark Been said worse ... by better. Marriage, Harvey, 1992-
1996 miscarriage 1996-2004 Ian, Carlos Gilbert, Mrs. Pong
Play

Epilogue: Deja Vu

2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2012 2013 2014
Talk to God Epilogue Garcia Black Muddy River about
living one's life in spite of the heartbreak, he sang: "When it
seems like the night will last forever/And there's nothing
left to do but count the years/When the strings of my heart
start to sever/Stones fall from my eyes instead of tears/I
will walk alone by the black muddy river ... land sing me a
song of my own." Those were among the last words Garcia
sang at his final Grateful Dead show at Chicago's Soldier
Field on July 9th, 1995. Not bad as farewells go. Wharf rat
August West "Half my life I spent doin time for some other
fucker's crime/The other half found me sumblin around
drunk on burgundy wine" s, Springsteen down by the river,
Dylan "You must leave now? Take what you need, you think
will ast." despired sentimentality. Don't look back. Rear
view mirror smaller than front windshield. or. Pranksters
said "nothing lasts" entered a timeless space. tune, self-
word in Garcia decision not to seek politics at central
library high street

Again Poems Prayers Promises John Denver look up 47
Ronin statement that person is only in thoughts of
children. Stated by lead Japanese actor just before the big
battle. We all must die. Mathew and Daniel 12:3 again.

Notes: Carolyn Steedman, Past Tenses, says that
“Writing, considered as a psychological and linguistic
process, can act as a powerful synthesizer of ideas and
reality, of belief and experience.

Avoid pothole

And Jesus wept John 11:35. A man of sorrows Isai 53:3.
Knows our frame Psalm 103:14, what is in us John 2:25
shares in our flesh and blood Heb 2:14 sorrow even
unto death Matt 26:38.

Does not stand aloof 11:38